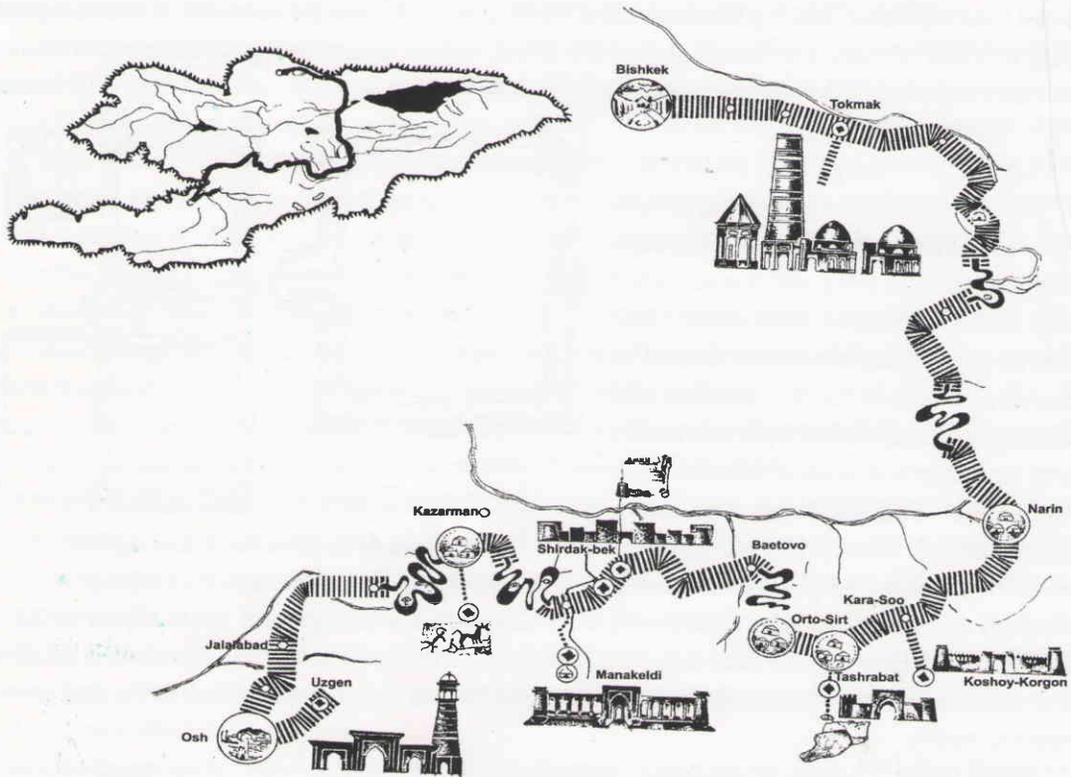


## KYRGYZSTAN

Original monuments of history and culture rise above various routes of Silk Road on the territory of Kyrgyzstan. It was the northern (Fergana) route that mattered most in the ancient period, especially as active relations were maintained with Davan in the early Han time. The eastern route came from Kashgar via a pass Terek-Davan, through a valley Alay along the river Gulchi to Tar, then across Kara-Darya to Uzgen; from there it turned to the Osh oasis and then to the west (town Ershi) and the north (Kan Gyui). Most researchers tend to believe that Zhang-Jian availed himself of this route in 138 BC to get to the western lands. This fragment is well marked by monuments, especially of the Moslem times when Arab itineraries described it as 2-route transit corridor from the west to the east: a) via Osh-Medva (Mady) to Alay in the south and further to Kashgar via Terek-Davan; b) from Osh to Uzgen in the east, then through mountain passes to valleys of Inner Tien Shan. In the region of At-Bashi the road forked: 1) via passes Tash-Rabat and Torugart to the region of Kashgar; 2) to the southern bank of Issyk Kul, from there to Aksu through the pass Bedel. Note that local sections of this route attended to other regions of Fergana. These regions are believed to have been opened up in the ancient period, and thus contributed to intensive contacts of Han residents with Semirechye, in particular, Chuy and Talas valleys, Issyk Kul. Most specialists agree that a route through Southern Issyk Kul region was used in the 2-4 centuries AD. Contacts intensified in the early Middle Ages



*Kyrgyzstan on the Great Silk Road*

when due to the internecine war in Fergana the caravans preferred to travel by this route. This epoch gave birth to some medieval sites in Chuy and Talas valleys, Issyk Kul region and partly Tien Shan. In the Moslem period the whole territory of Kyrgyzstan was transpierced by various sections of this arterial road. Active in the north as before was a Semirechensk-South Kazakhstan piece of road, Inner Tien Shan and a Fergana offshoot.

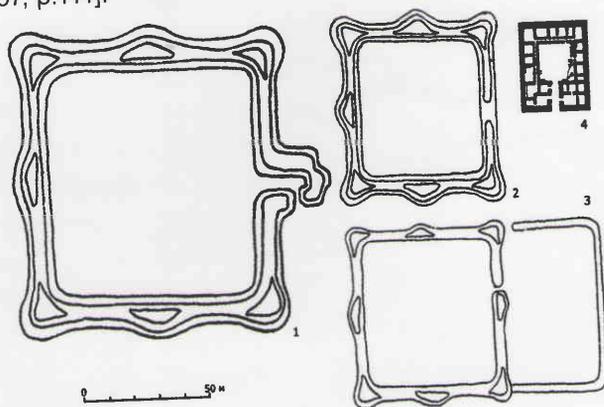
It should be noted that the routes mentioned above were of priority for Kyrgyzstan in terms of three chronological landmarks: antiquity, early and developed Middle Ages. Note that political, military and economic developments of the 13 century depreciated importance of the routes above. Some reanimation came as a result of the political and military activity of Timur and his descendants. However, the traditional use of Silk Road routes by the population has continued to the new times.

It was Buddhist pilgrim Suang Tsan with his interesting travel notes who traveled across one of these routes in 629, from Aksu via Issyk Kul, Chuy valley and further via Samarkand to India. For this reason, contemporary researchers call this route as "road of Suang Tsan". However, this route was discovered much earlier, in the time of intensive ties between Han China and Usun (2 century BC), the capital of which – Chigu-chen was located, as many researchers believe, on Issyk Kul. This route was traditionally admitted to run from Aksu via passes Bedel, Seok, valley Ara Bela, passes Sary Moynok, Barskoon and then through a valley of the river Barskoon to the southern shore of Issyk Kul [Bartold, 1996, p.256]. The route was laid along the south-western shore of the lake to get access to the Chuy valley. As viewed by Suang Tsan, there were three settlements – Dun, Hele and Yechzhi [Bartold, 1996, p.258]. In turn, Arab-Persian sources of the 11-12 centuries refer to four large (including Yar, Ton, Barskhan) and five small towns [Ivanov, 1957, p.69; Bernstam, 1941, p.80], i.e. nine settlements. Archaeological data indicate of more intensified settled life of the region, enumerating 17 sites in the south-western segment of the valley [Vinnik, 1967, p.111].

### Issyk Kul

Sites extant in Issyk Kul region are typologically classified into three groups. First, these were sites with the so-called "long walls" – Barskoon, Khan-Dobe (Ton) and so forth. They are characterized by developed central ruins – citadels and with pronounced fortified walls and towers and an adjacent area encircled with "long walls". Second, these were sites-caravanserais, sites-fortresses and sites-shelters (so-called tortkuli) – Barskoon-2, Kadjisay and Tosor; compact settlements with geometrically regular wall contours and strong fortifications. Third, these were estates and small unfortified villages, located, as a rule, within the bounds of the sites of the first group [Vinnik, 1967].

**Khan Dobe.** The site Khan-Dobe, pertaining to the first group sites of the south-western Issyk Kul and situated in the valley of the river Ton, is in a good state of preservation. It is also



*Sites of south-western Issyk-Kul region:*

- 1 - Tosor 2 - Barskoon-2, 3 - Kadjisay  
4 - Sarah-Bulun. (By: [Vinnik 1966; Vinnik 1978])

called as "Ton site"; the probability remains that these are ruins of the town Dun, mentioned in the notes of pilgrim Suang Tsan, and, beyond any doubts, Ton was pertaining to the Upper Barskhan region. The town had first been visited by V.K.Gern in 1877. Subsequently, the ruins were repeatedly mentioned by many researchers; the latest excavations were carried out in 2010 by K.Sh.Tabaldiyev. The site is located at the entrance to the gorge and surrounded by mountains from three sides, and confined by a high steep terrace of the river Ton in the east [Bartold, 1996, p.428; Vinnik, 1967, p.98]. Central ruins encircled by a "multi-angular" wall, occupy an area of 500x600 m. Fortified walls, 4 m in foundation and 5 m high, had protruding towers, 40-70 m one from another. To judge by topography, gates stretched from the north, west and south; the southern gates were reinforced by a special support" [Bartold, 1996, p.428; Vinnik, 1967, p.98]. A citadel with an adjoining courtyard was located in the south-eastern part of the site. At present, it has a form of conic, sub-square hill (60x60). As viewed by D.F.Vinnik, the site existed from the 7 to the 12 centuries [1967, p.98]. Small settlements were laid on the approaches to the site from the shore; settlements of this sort were found in the upper reaches of the gorge toward the pass Ton, and thus marked another offshoot of the Silk Road to connect Issyk Kul with Inner Tian Shan.

The most remarkable among the objects of the second group are as follows:

**Barskoon-2.** The site Barskoon-2 is located in the bottom of the gorge, on the right terrace of the river. It was square in plan (60 m each). Towers of semi-circular form are in the corners and the center of the eastern wall. Cultural stratifications are 1,5 m thick; an entrance is in the center of the eastern wall. Functionally, it was undoubtedly a fortress to protect the gorge and, hence, a section of the Silk Road via passes Barskoon and Bedel to the region of Aksu. The site is dated to the early Middle Ages – 12 century inclusive [Vinnik, 1967, p.104].

On the western outskirts of a village with the same name, 200 m to the north from the road Balykchi-Karakol, there is a site Tosor. The site attended to a segment between the two large towns of the region – Barskhan and Ton. The town is square in plan, length of the sides is 100 m; oriented by cardinal points; walls are flanked by towers of semi-circular form; U-shaped entrance is in the center of the eastern wall and additionally reinforced by a tower. The topography of the site and materials of small-scale excavations made it possible to date it to the Karakhanide period [Vinnik, 1967, p.103-104].

**Kadjisay.** The site Kadjisay rises above a high steep lake terrace, 1 km to the east from a modern village with the same name. It was a square with 60 m walls and towers in the corners and the center. There is a single entrance in the middle of the eastern wall. There is also an outhouse (60x40 m) with thinner walls. Entrance to the outhouse was at the north-eastern tower. The site is dated to the 9-12 centuries [Vinnik, 1967, p.102-103].

**Sary Bulun.** Of monuments of the third group worthy of note is a caravanserai Sary Bulun. It is located in the western part of Issyk Kul hollow, on the first terrace above flood land of the right bank of the river Chu. The caravanserai is sub-square in plan with a single entrance in the middle of the southern wall. Compositionally, the layout is based on a large courtyard (12,5[14 m) on the central axis and encircled by rooms. As is seen from materials available and, first of all, ceramics, the caravanserai Sary Bulun goes back to the Karakhanide period (11-12 centuries).

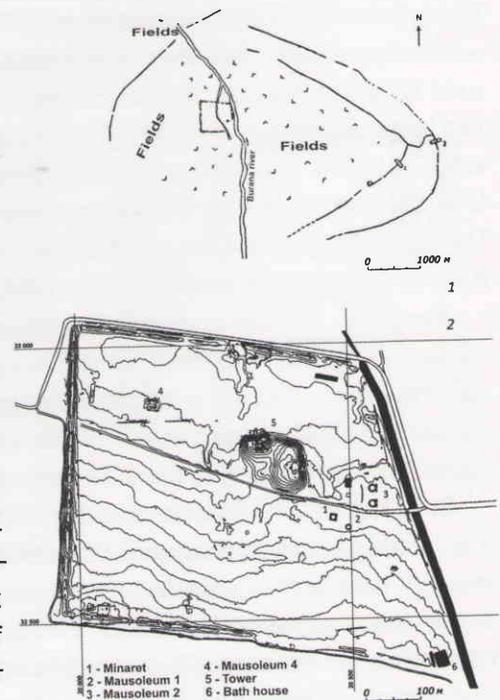
Of interest is an object located on the site Tamga. Three stones with a Tibetan inscription "Om mani padme hum" are scattered 2 km to the south from a village with the same name. The

inscription is deeply engraved, highly artistic, dated to the 16-18 centuries, the so-called Jungar epoch. As viewed by some researchers, places with Buddhist epigraphy designed to indicate routes of caravans with pilgrims to Tibet that availed themselves of the Silk Road routes are known from early and developed Middle Ages.

### Chuy valley

In the Middle Ages the Chuy valley was one of the most urbanized regions of North Kyrgyzstan. Arab-Persian sources provide information about some towns and settlements of the Chuy valley, as well as routes that linked them. However, the information on the subject is scant. More detailed information is provided about three towns in the east of the valley: Suyab, Nevaket and Balasagun. Note that Suyab and Nevaket were, at different times, political centers of the Western Turkic and Turkesh kaganates, while Balasagun – a major town of the Karakhanide state and the entire Central Asia. An eloquent testimony to the importance of Nevaget as a center of Christianity in the 12-13 centuries is a name of the Nestorian metropolitan – “Metropolitan of Kashgar and Nevaket”. According to archaeological data, a group of settlements arose in the Chuy valley in the early Middle Ages. By the 10-11 centuries, some of them grew into large towns engirded by several rings of the so-called “long walls”, 5-8 km in diameter. They are 15-20 km apart to mark the Silk Road routes. Smaller settlements with strong fortifications are grouped around them. To all appearances, sites of this grouping performed different functions. These could have been advanced fortresses, caravanserais and temple-monastery complexes. The third group of settlements were located on the going-out of gorges to the valley [Kozhemyako, 1959, p.131-166]. It may be supposed that they acted as fortresses, locked mountain passages and protected water supply system.

**Burana.** Archaeologically most studied is the site Burana. It is located 12 km to the south from a regional center Tokmam, between villages Burana and Don-Aryk. The site is pertaining to sites with the so-called “long walls”; arose presumably in the end of the 8-9 centuries and existed till the 13-14 centuries. A central part of the site – shahristan is an irregular quadrangle oriented to cardinal points, dimensions: 570 x 500 x 600 x 570 m [Kozhemyako, 1959, p.126]. Mounds of not monumental towers stand out on the walls. Closer to the eastern wall there is a burnt brick made medieval minaret (partly destroyed), known under the name “Burana’s tower”. There was a necropolis to the east and the north-east from the minaret, of which currently extant are lower components of three mausoleums of burnt brick and a series of ground burials. Another burnt brick-made structure – mausoleum #4 was identified and explored in the north-western sector of the site [Vinnik, 1975; Goryacheva, 2010...]. Two large hills, 15 m high with an adjacent ground in the



*Site Burana: 1 - within the long walls  
(by: Kozhemyako 1959, 2 - shahristan)  
(survey 2006-2007)*

south-western part form a single complex, dimensions: 100x100, [Kozhemyako, 1959, p.126]. Excavations revealed under the western mound the ruins of a castle-type structure with corridor-comb-shaped layout typical for the Central Asian architecture of the 8-9 centuries [Semenov, 2000]. As for a rabad, remains of a medieval bath-house of burnt brick, and a segment of urban water pipeline were discovered and explored. It consisted of two lashes of ceramic pipes, one of which fed water to the bath-house. There were two concentric wall rings (the so-called "long walls") that girdled the rabad around central ruins and adjoining structures. Total length of an extant (in the 1950s) part of outward ring comprised 11 km [Kozhemyako, 1959, p.127-128]; initial length is, perhaps, 17-20 km.

Beyond any doubts, a central object of the monument is minaret. It rests on a foundation, square in plan, faced with masonry and paved with burnt brick. Above, there is a quadrangular step, on which rests a socle's octahedron, 4 m high [Goryacheva, 1985, 50-51]. At present, its edges are in the form of portals with slightly "drowned" lancet niches, whose space is filled with geometrized ornament. A cylindrical tube is decorated with horizontal, ornamental belts. Its present height is 22; initial height ranges between 40 m and 50 m. Décor is comprised of protruding standard brick to create additional treatment of light and shade. In considering the nature of décor and rudimentary constructive features, the erection is dated to the end of the 10 century [Goryacheva, 1983, p.32; Goryacheva, 2010, p.137].

It was a minaret and a Moslem cemetery at its foundation together with top-quality mausoleums of burnt brick and Moslem Kayrak tomstones that provided researchers with weighty arguments to identify the monument with the town Balasagun, capital of the Karakhanide kaganate, the first state on the area, in which Islam took dominant position.

Further contributing to the site's fame was the discovery of a necropolis of the 12-14 centuries to the south from the central ruins. Its unquestionable Christian origin is accounted for by gravestones. Brief epitaphs, names, sometimes an occupation and a year of burial (according to the Seleucid era and/or 12 year cyclic calendar), as well as depictions of cross were drawn on gravestones. Also, underwear crosses were found on the site; a part of them is kept at a site's museum. Typological analogues were discovered on the sites Kara-Jigach and Krasnaya Rechka.

While Moslem and Christian monuments on the Burana site are widely known, not many are aware of finds of Buddhist origin. The first find from the Western mound was made by L.M.Vedutova. A small Bodhisatva statuette was inside a raw-brick. It is made of bronze with traces of gilding. Despite its small size (about 5 cm), the statuette startles with its refinement. Another find – a sculpture in 2/3 height of red stone depicted a frontal character in pleated garment. However, the sculpture is deficient in some components: its front part was purposely cut off in the Middle Ages; its head is lost, trunk and legs broken into two fragments. The fact that the sculpture was found in direct proximity to the monumental structure makes it possible to identify it as remains of a Buddhist temple or monastery.

The analysis of years-long data on material culture of this medieval town is illustrative of highly developed handicrafts (pottery, bronze-foundry, iron-working, jewelry, etc.) and coinage. Finds include Chinese porcelain, seladon, Iranian chandelier ceramics, Khorasan bronze crockery and kumgans. Beyond any doubts, the Burana site was a large, highly developed urban center on the Silk Road.

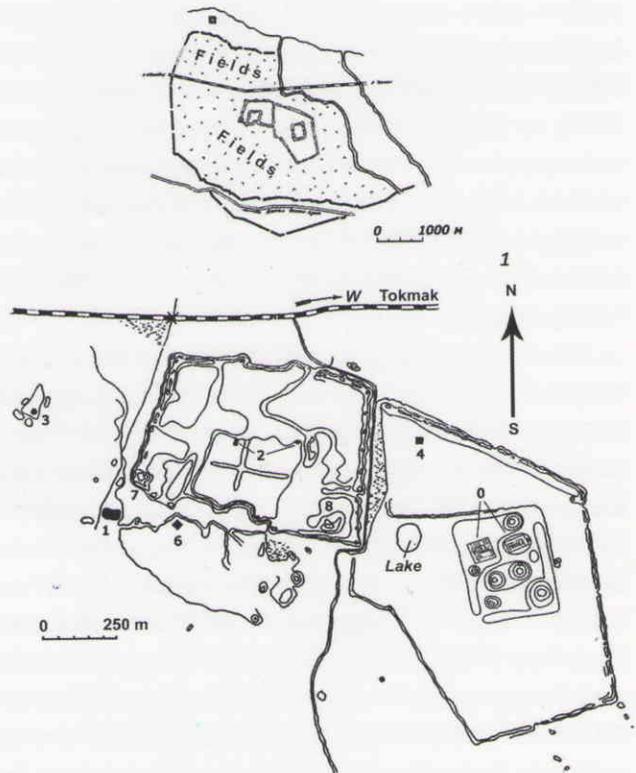
**Ak-Beshim.** The site Ak-Beshim is situated 8 km to the south-west from the town Tokmak; identifiable with medieval towns as referred to in written sources, including Nevaket (N.F.Petrovskiy) and Balasagun (V.V.Bartold, A.N.Bernstam, L.R.Kyzlasov). Most of contemporary researchers associate it with Suyab (Clousen, P.N.Kozhemyako, G.L.Semenov, V.D.Goryacheva et al.) The site Ak-Beshim is pertaining to a group of sites with “long walls”, consists of sites with “long walls”, consists of several traditional components typical for medieval town planning.

A principal part of the site is a shahristan-1, an irregular quadrangle with an area of about 35 he. It is oriented by cardinal points and girdled by walls (600x500x700x400 m) with their tower traces – 34 strong mounds. A citadel, quadrangular in plan and surrounded by a small courtyard, is situated in the south-western corner. It had strong towers in the four corners. One of them, outward south-western, was dug out; monolith, made of large pahn block together with a wall, drop-shaped in plan [Semenov, 2002, p.11].

An upper layer revealed a palace-type structure to comply with a scheme “a courtyard surrounded by rooms”. The courtyard was of square form with ayvans connecting with outward rooms in the middle of each side. To judge by finds, numismatic included, the palace, as the author maintains, goes back to the 10-11 centuries. The earliest layer of the citadel was uncovered in an angle vaulted room. Ceramic finds made it possible to date it to the 7-8 centuries not earlier. A reservation is made that this layer is not on subsoil [Semenov, 2000, p.11-69]. Thickness of cultural stratifications on the site reaches 7,5 m. There is a sub-square section in the center that occupies a greater part of the site. In all probability, this marked the beginning of town’s further development [Kyzlasov, 1959; Kozhemyako, 1959].

An object in the south-eastern corner was explored more or less fully. Archaeologists succeeded in disclosing approx.50 rooms and, following the results of laborious analysis, they came to the conclusion that it was the Central Asia’s largest complex of Christian churches of the 10-11 (12) centuries.

It would be appropriate to note that four altar rooms were located in one line along the eastern wall of the shahristan. Spacious, stretched out halls, or open courtyards were lined up in front of these rooms from the west. Industrial premises were situated in the northern part of the complex. Also, several coins of the Karakhanide type were found, following which

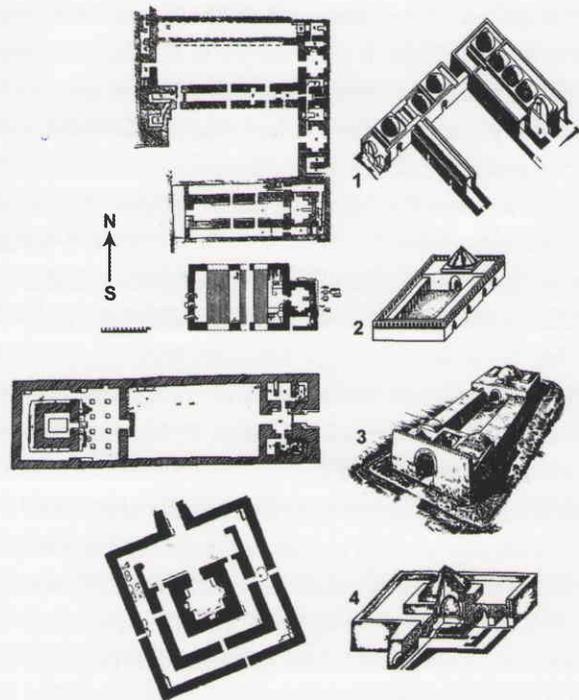


*Site Ak-Beshim: 1 - within the long walls (by Kozhemyako 1959), 2 - shahristan 1 and 2 (by: "Chuy Valley" 1950 with additions)*

opportunity arose to date the complex to the 11-12 centuries [Semenov, 2000, p.95]. Of interest are ceramic plates with crosses engraved; a part of them was “a negative”, i.e. stamp, matrix. Other artifacts with Christian attributes, including a cross with Sogdian inscriptions on its ends, were also found. Account has to be taken of a winepress in the south-eastern corner of the complex, and a storage facility hum-khane with eight large vessels-hums, 150-200 litres each [Semenov, 2000, p.56-59]. The very fact of the winepress was not new for the region; however, its being a part of the Christian complex is out of the common!

The shahristan-2 joined the shahristan-1 from the eastern side; researchers called it “Kidān quarter”, “rabad” (60 he). It was a pentagon with traces of towers, and a tortkuli (quadrangle) in the center, dimensions: 200x300 m. Material obtained enabled researchers to maintain that the object in question was a Buddhist monastery. Initially it was dated to the 11-12 centuries (Chuy valley, 1950, p.29-30); later on – 9-10 centuries [Bernstam, 1949]. Architectural pieces, fragments of earthenware and a stone Buddhist sculpture, remains of wall paintings and a small quantity of fragment crockery were found. A monumental structure oriented latitudinally, dimensions: 36x15 m, was explored in the north-western part. The structure was identified as a Christian temple with a cemetery. An underwear cross was found in one of the interments. The object is dated to the 8 century [Kyzlasov, 1959, p.231-233]. Later on, other datings were suggested: mid-7-earlier 8 centuries [Vysotskiy, 1998]; 8-10 centuries [Kolchenko, 2003]. A town district – rabad was encircled with three long walls in a radius of above 1,5 km; in the eastern side the territory was confined to a deep natural gully. The rabad revealed ruins of a temple with ossuary interments; a burial complex of Manicheans and two Buddhist temples that brought world fame to Ak-Beshim [Kyzlasov, 1959].

The first Buddhist temple was a monumental structure with three periods of its development. Initially, it was identified as remains of Buddhist temple. There was a group of rooms, a large courtyard, “a vestibule”, a sanctuary (cella), a bypass gallery around cella. Fragments of Buddhist sculpture and polychrome wall painting were discovered. Of particular interest is a group of bronzed, gilded open-worked badges. After fire, separate rooms were used as habitable premises. At a final stage some premises were filled with rubble, and above them other structures were erected; enclosures were arranged in the western part. Note that L.R.Kyzlasov dated the temple by the 7-8 centuries; habitable premises and enclosures – by the end of the 8-9 centuries; a



*Maps of renovation of the temples and fort of Ak-Beshim:*

*1 - a set of Christian Churches, 2 - the Christian Church, 3 - the 1st Buddhist temple, 4 - 2nd Buddhist temple.*

*(by Semenov, 2002; Kyzlasov 1958; Kyzlasov 1959;*

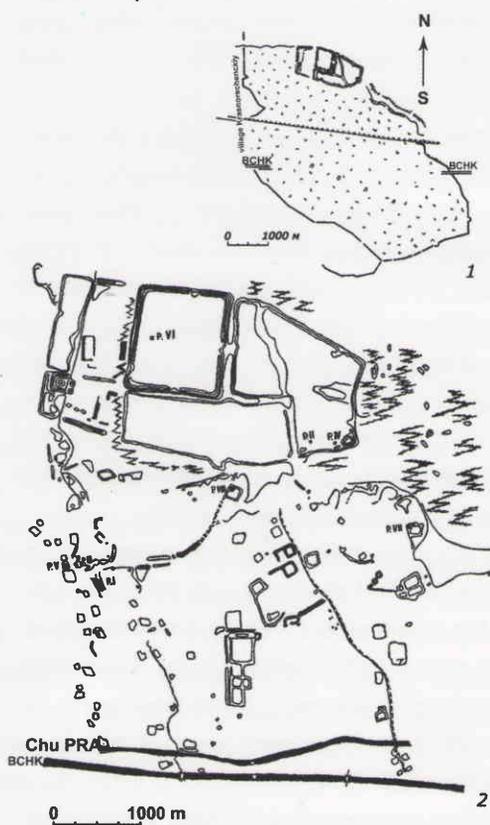
*Khmelnitsky 1959; Goryacheva, Peregudova 1996)*

final stage – by the 9-10 centuries. A great quantity of the fragments of a clay sculpture above human height; pedestals, polychrome paintings from walls and ceilings were identified. The temple did not exist long: arose in the 6-7 centuries, destroyed in the end of the 7-beginning 8 centuries [Zyablin, 1961, p.67-69].

An impression may arise that the site Ak-Beshim was a center of temples and burial complexes of different religions – Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Christianity. But it would be wrong to think so. It is a matter of the future to explore living quarters, and, first of all, the shahristan-1. By the way, some work on this track was done in 1997 and 2006-2008 under the supervision of L.M.Vedutova. Structures excavated on a small area in some places of the shahristan show indications of living and industrial quarters and are dated to the Karakhanide period. Thus, a L.R.Kyzlasov's view on cessation of life on the site in the 10 century is untenable, as is evidenced by Ak-Beshim and practically all the sites of the Chuy valley that had happily continued to the Mongolian period. Even small-scale archaeological excavations of 20- earlier 21 centuries on the site Ak-Beshim give weight to the fact that the monument was of paramount importance for the history of Kyrgyzstan culture. That was a crucial center of the Silk Road, through which not only goods did move but also cultural and spiritual values penetrated to thus asseverate tolerance and continuity of the people residing on this territory.

**Krasnaya Rechka.** The site Krasnaya Rechka is situated on the motor road Bishkek-Balychi to the east from the capital of Kyrgyzstan. It consists of components traditional for medieval town planning. Central ruins – shahristans and a citadel are located on the first terrace of the river Chu, on several outliers between flood-lands of ancient meridian. Structure and configuration of the ruins are complex to stretch 700 m from the north to the south and 1200 m from the west to the east. The latest exploration on a smaller shahristan enabled researchers to specify previously adduced data on its walls' structure [Goryacheva, Baipakov, 1989, p.72; Baipakov, 1998, p.140]. The walls are distinguished for two construction periods; the first one not earlier than mid-end of the 8 century [Torgoyev, Kolchenko, 2010]. Note that 14 large mounds peep out on the walls and conceal towers. Strong moats encircle the walls from the outside. Excavations reveal 2-3 construction periods, the latter ended with a terrible fire in the 12 century. The southern and western walls of the small shahristan are encircled by a closed line of fortified walls – the large shahristan. Strong mounds-towers peep out on the walls of this part of the town [Baipakov, 1998, p.140].

In the south-eastern corner of the large shahristan there is a site's citadel on natural eminence that outlasted three construction periods.



*Map of the site Krasnaya Rechka:*

*1 - within the long walls by Kozhemyako 1959,  
2 - shahristan 1 and 2 by Bernstam 1941*

A narrow, flat-arched, vaulted room of the 6-7 centuries was excavated in the lower horizon; 10 rooms and an internal courtyard of the 9-10 centuries in the second horizon; and dwelling houses of the middle of the 12 century in the upper horizon.

One more structural part of the site – the so-called western outhouse is located to the west from the small shahristan. Its destination remains vague. But soon after the north-western part grew into a necropolis with different type interments, the stratigraphy of which has not been established. Of no less difficult is a question of interments' dating.

To the south from the western outhouse there is a last structural component of the central ruins – southern outhouse. It consists of cone-shaped dominant, encircled by structures in perimeter and a large wall. The object was interpreted as a citadel, a Buddhist stupa and a temple of fire [Chuy valley, 1950, p.12].

It would be appropriate to recall that a monumental structure, 1 km to the south from the citadel was interpreted by authors of excavations (Goryacheva, Berenaliyev, Peregudova) as a country palace. The object is practically square in plan; a spacious courtyard in the center and rooms around. The walls were decorated with colored panels of fretted clay. The largest fragments are noted for superficial fretwork that formed drawing's contours of epigraphic or stylized-vegetation nature. According to archaeological data, the construction goes back to the 10-11 centuries to last till the 12 century with 3 reconstructions.

Several living estates were unearthed by R.N.Kozhemyako and V.D.Goryacheva. All of them go back to one and the same date: 11-12 centuries. Outwardly, a living part was comprised of a monumental structure, square in plan, 15-20 m long. An entrance was in the middle of a wall and formed out protruding pylons (arch or peshtak). Walls were flanked with decorative towers in the corners. A semi-square central hall on a main axis with rooms by perimeter was connected with the entrance with the help of a wide corridor. This gave cause for S.Khmelnitskiy to insist on a sort of ayvan [Khmelnitskiy, 1997, p.109]. Archaeological material included ossuaries – peculiar sepulchral vessels of Zoroastrians. However, they were discovered in different places and go back to different chronological periods [Kolchenko, 2008].

The Krasnaya Rechka site won fame due to two Buddhist temples. Both were located in a rabad: first at the southern wall of the large shahristan; second of flood-land terrace, 240 m to the south-east from a citadel. It reposed on rubble remains of a low-lying monumental structure with differently oriented walls. Researchers single out two construction periods [Goryacheva, Peregudova, 1996, p.172]. Compositionally, the temple is based on a square dome-overlapped sanctuary with a single exist eastwards. In the first period, the temple had, according to experts, a four-elbowed bypass corridor. A sufa with a colossal sculpture of Sleeping Buddha was attached to a sanctuary's wall in the back corridor. In the second period the front door was dismantled, while the northern and the southern ones elongated eastwards. Thus, a hall was formed in front of the sanctuary to look eastwards. An entrance to the sanctuary is distinguished by 5-step staircase set off by "peshtek with a vaulted niche" and sculptural portrayals of Bodhisatva, 2,5 m each [Goryacheva, Peregudova, 1996, p.173-174; Goryacheva, 2010, p.112]. Exploration of the object revealed remains of wall paintings and clay sculptures going back both to the first and second periods. Clay curls and a related mould were discovered in the Southern corridor. A miniature gilded sculpture of Avalokiteshvara and inscriptions on birch bark were also discovered in the sanctuary. At different times, epigraphic monuments written in the Sogdian,

Syrian, Indian and Arab languages were identified to give weight to town's importance as a center of international transit trade.

In 2004-2007, within the framework of the UNESCO-aegis "Preservation of Silk Road Segments in the Upper Reaches of the Chuy Valley" project, a work was done to document and conserve the object. Among others, fragments of clay sculpture (curls) and remains of paintings were found in small forced pits to the sanctuary. This gives cause to suppose that the lowlying building was also attributable to Buddhism.

Note that the three monuments above – sites Burana, Ak-Beshim and Krasnaya Rechka are going to be put on the UNESCO World Heritage list. The sites of the Chuy valley are designed to pave the way to Taraz as focal point of the Silk Road. It was Suang Tsan who traveled this road in 629. Besides, there is every reason to believe that a road led northwards to the Ili valley from the Krasnaya Rechka site (Nevaket) [Baipakov, 1998; Goryacheva, 2010]; from Ak-Beshim and Burana via the pass Shamsi, Kochkor site further via Tien Shan to Kashgaria and Fergana [Kolchenko, 2003a]. To judge by archaeological evidence, the segment started to operate intensively in the 10-11 centuries only.



*Buddhist artifacts: 1-matrix and the curls of hair, alabaster, clay, 2-Bodhisattva, gilt bronze, 3-fragment of Sutra, written by Brahma, 4-stele, a stone, 1-3-2nd Buddhist temple and fort Krasnaya Rechka, 4 - fort Ak-Beshim*

### **Talas valley**

One route from Taraz led to the upper reaches of the Talas valley. Intensive operation of the route is believed to date by early Middle Ages. Written sources say that contacts were maintained with the north-eastern Fergana in the ancient times through a passage in the Kara-Buura gorge via a pass in the Talas Ala-Too and Chanach in the Chatkal ridge [Baipakov, 1998, p.12]. It was this route through which a Chinese detachment moved to suppress the Hun chief Chzhi-chzhi in 36 BC [Aristov, 2001, p.19]. True, some researchers are prone to believe that the contacts above were contrary to the international trade along the route but rather were of domestic, regional nature within the framework of nomadic and semi-nomadic possessions of Usung-Ka [Goryacheva, 2010, p.78]. One can hardly agree with this point of view, for sources testify to intensive relations between these early state formations and Han China, as is evidenced by archaeological data.

Pertaining to the same epoch is a well-known monument-Kenkol burial ground. It mostly consists of catacombs and usual ground holes going back to the last centuries BC and first

centuries AD Abundant material data, including silk downs, confirm active contacts between nomads and various historical-cultural regions stretched along the Silk Road. Note that petroglyphs located above the said burial ground, on small shale outcrops and depicting economic-ritual life of the nomadic population, go back to the same epoch [Archaeological..., 1963, p.33-54; Amanbayeva et al..., 2007]. In the 10-11 centuries, a middle part of the valley is referred to in Arab-script sources as a mining region of Sheldji, one of the main silver suppliers of the Moslem world [Istahri, ibn Khaukal, Kudama, al-Mukaddasi]. The sources above mention names of some historical towns to the south-east from Taraz. All of them are clearly localized and identifiable with specific sites to operate as peculiar markers of the route. These include Atlah (Joon-Tobe); Sheldji (Sadyr-Korgon), Sus (Chaldyvar), Kul (Ak-Tobe Orlovskoye), Tekabket (Ak-Tobe Talasskoye) [Bartold, 1996, p.385-386; Goryacheva, 2010, p.46-47]. Al-Mukaddasi mentions Atlah as a town identical to the capital of the region in size and area, i.e. the point is about Ispidjab or Taraz. Sheldji is called as a small town where scores of foreigners settled down, including 10,000 Isfahan residents. Kudama ibn Jafar, author of the 10 century, refers to a segment from Taraz to Upper Barskhan via valleys of Talas, Suusamyr and Kochkor [Karayev, 2004, p.242-243] that linked with Inner Tien Shan and Issyk Kul region that directly led to Eastern Turkestan.

Archaeologists point out that in fact there were approx. 60 towns and settlements. Most monuments were, to an extent, explored by the Semirechensk and Talas expeditions [Bernstam, 1997, p.79-139; Archaeological..., 1963, p.113-223]. By their geographical location and topographic structure, the monuments are classified into several groups. First includes the largest ones consisting of a citadel, a shahristan and districts surrounded by the so-called "long walls", similar to those from Chuy and Issyk Kul sites. Their distribution on a locality is strictly regular: they are placed along flood lands of the main water artery of the Talas valley; most frequently, at confluences of various tributaries, at a distance of 15-20 km one from another. These include the sites Jon-Tobe, Sadyr-Korgon, Ak-Tobe Orlovskoye, Ak-Tobe Talasskoye.

The second group is composed of sites with clearly pronounced central ruins, and of districts with habitation traces with no external defensive structures. They are also stretched along a river strip of Talas and its large and high-water tributaries. These include Chaldyvar only.

The third groups are comprised of small settlements that, as a rule, located in the upper reaches of small rivers, gorges, sometimes between large sites, on plain. Activity outside external walls is traces seldom. There were also temporary settlements engaged in ore extraction only [Archaeological, 1963, p.113].

It would be appropriate to note that large and small settlements of the upper and middle zone of Talas in the 10-12 centuries are noted for a great quantity of slags. Slag outcrops, 2 m high and 200 m long, were found on the sites with long walls that testify to the great role of mining and metallurgic production in this sub-region. Written sources bear this out. In the main, silver was extracted; while gold and copper extracted to much lesser degree. Note that residents of other regions, in particular, Khorasan, were also engaged in mining. An ore processing workshop was cleaned on the site Ak-Tobe Orlovskoye (Kul) [Archaeological..., 1963, p.133-225]. Note Ak-Tobe Talas, identifiable with Tekabket, is located 30 km to the north-east from this monument. An estate, occupying an area of 60x40 m and located within the bounds of the first belt of walls, was unearthed to the east from the shahristan. A building with walls, 14,3x21x23 m, was situated in the corner of a reinforced segment; the building was cleared

with walls in a good state of preservation, 2-2,5 m high, that gives weight to the fact that it had a second floor as well. It was erected in the early Middle Ages, but used for a long span of time, the latest 10-12 centuries.

Of interest is the fact that the site did survive even after the Mongolian invasion. Some researchers tend to localize here a new political center of the valley of the 14 century – Yanghi-Talas. As is known, a naib was appointed to rule this town under Timur [Baipakov, 2002, p.27]. This probably accounts for the formation of a necropolis 4 km to the south-east from the town where a remarkable mausoleum was built in 1334 owned by a Chagatay princess but traditionally associated by the Kyrgyz population with a name of epic hero Manas. Main sights of the mausoleum are an artistically designed portal in the southern wall. It is entirely reveted by terracotta architectural tiles. Décor is notable for harmonious correlation of geometrical, vegetation and epigraphic patterns. Key elements of the composition are two ribbons, equal in width, containing religious and historical inscriptions. The mausoleum is the latest monument of the region, the ornamentation of which was based on fretted terracotta. Its significance for the culture of Kyrgyzstan is accounted for by not only architectural-artistic value but also by the fact that the Manas mausoleum is one of the national symbols of the country. Of unquestionable value is non-material cultural heritage in the form of various rituals and ceremonies, traditions of folk narrators, as well as pre-Islamic beliefs and idolization of nature. For a long period of time, traditions of the usage of territory under summer pastures – jayloo underwent no changes in Kenkol gorge. This explains insertion of the complex of monuments, including Ak-Tobe Talas, Kenkol burial ground and petroglyphs, a mausoleum of the 14 century, in a preliminary list of Silk Road-related monuments of Kyrgyzstan.

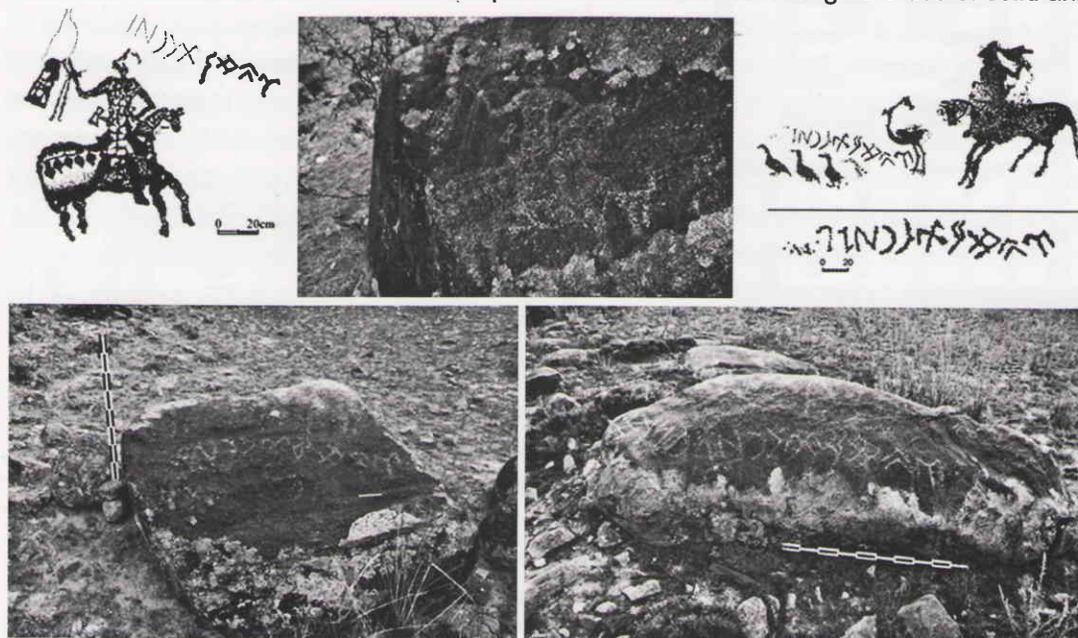
Having crossed the Kyrgyz mountain ridge, caravans got to the Kochkor valley of Inner Tien Shan. It was whimsical combination of mountain ridges and related valleys, developed river system and climatic conditions that favored cattle-breeding and farming [Geography..., 1978, p.50]. In the end of the I millennium, this potential became reality: a great number of settlements, fortress, caravanserais arose in Inner Tien Shan (Kibirov, 1959; Kolchenko, 2000). The said objects were erected along traditional routes, the formation of which fell on the domination of early nomads in the region and the maintenance of intensive diplomatic relations with the Han Empire. That was vividly echoed in the construction of numerous funeral-burial monuments of Sako-Usung and Hun cultures, finds of imported products.

Inestimably contributing to the Silk Road formation was an epoch of Turkic kaganates. This epoch marked the beginning of processes of sedentarization and later urbanization of nomadic population. Gradually, the region became a part of Silk Road operations arising from transit trade with China and the states of Eastern Turkestan, Central Asia and the West. These factors, to a degree, contributed to the emergence of towns, settlements and caravanserais in Inner Tien Shan: the latter had hitherto been an area of nomadic habitation.

In this respect, of particular importance are monuments having been created by nomads, including those constituting a considerable portion of medieval objects. These are largely burial mounds, funeral enclosures with statues, and Runic characters discovered recently in the Kochkor valley. Remarkable specimens were identified in the districts Bel-Saz I-III, Besh-Tash-Koroo I-III, Kok-Say, Suttuu-Bulak I-II, located in the piedmont and inter-mountain terrains of the Kochkor valley.

It should be noted that the burial mounds are located compactly. Outwardly, these are small, roundish stone-earth embankments, sometimes consolidated by round stones. Underground parts are sepulchral holes with breaking-in pit to accommodate the diseases; a horse of the diseased was buried in the entrance pit. A funeral stock of the mound included arms, harnesses, adornments, Organic artifacts – fragments of leather products, fabric, including imported silk, are sometimes found. Fences were located to the north from burial mounds. Traditionally, they were made of rock plates. Stone statues were installed in the western side, sometimes alternated by steles or boulders. Account has to be taken of the fact that western installation and orientation of statues are a hallmark of the monuments of this type in Kyrgyzstan. Traces of ritual ceremonies are apparent in the central part of the structure. Sometimes, horse burials were found inside enclosures. Note that horses burials complied with anatomical succession, harnesses, or skeletons decapitated. Burials of similar type inside funeral objects were found on the territory of Altai. Stone statues depict armed soldiers with arms in their hands (daggers, sabers); or a vessel (a goblet) in the right hand. Best specimens of the statues clearly demonstrate details of cloth, head-dresses (some in the form of “three-horned tiara”), waistbands, sometimes coiffures (plaits in seven or eight rows). Another type of monuments identifiable with nomadic population are petroglyphs.

Another type of monuments identifiable with nomadic population are petroglyphs. Note that the petroglyphs were identified in some localities, including Semiz-Bel, Kok-Say, Kalmak-Tash, Iyri-Suu and etc. Drawings are largely engraved on boulders; rarer on rock outcrops. Their contents are typical for rock paintings and found far beyond the territory of Kyrgyzstan. The drawings cover various periods, commencing from the Bronze Age to later Middle Ages. The region in question revealed runic characters engraved on boulders. These characters are localized at the foot of Mt. Ukok to the east from the village Kochkor in the locality Kok-Say, a smaller part of which is situated in the terrains Kalmak-Tash, Too-Karyn, Boyrok-Bulak, Kyzyl-Bulak and Kok-Buka. The characters are put on massive stones through the use of solid and



*Kochkor runic inscriptions and petroglyphs*

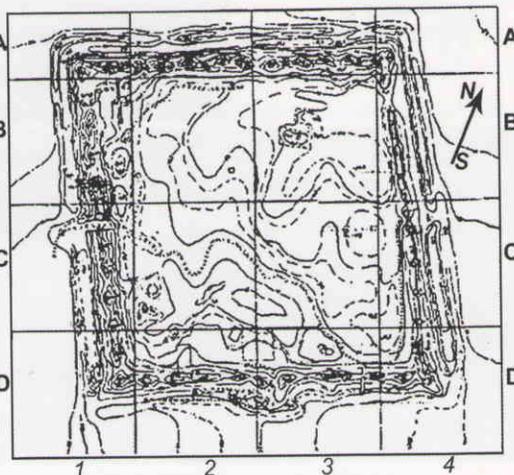
pointed shake-out; their disposition is horizontal-linear with vertical lettering. Height of lines is 15 to 22 cm, length – 2 m. Some of them are accompanied by petroglyphs (pictures of horse, birds, goat, a horseman with a hunting bird in this hand); tamga, Arab inscriptions. Among them there are both early and modern ones.

These are the first monuments of epigraphic discovered in Inner Tien Shan. Inscriptions consist of several recurrent texts: “My male name is Adyk (“Bear”) (in another variant: “My name of husband-er – Sigynak”). Ten arrows...”, “Ahead, over there (i.e. in the east) nomad camp. “My male name is Adyk. Ten arrows...”, “My male name is Adyk. My (our) Yarish in the country of ten arrows”, “Our Yarysh”, “Male name (of his) Kesik”, etc. An inscription from Kalmak-Tash was red and interpreted in its transcription as “My name of husband-er – Bilge”. It is essential to emphasize one feature: Kalmak-Tash inscriptions are made in classic Yenisey script (Tabaldiyev, Soltobayev, 2001; Klyashtorniy, 2002; Kyzlasov, 2005).

The functioning of the Silk Road led to the appearance of settlements and caravanserais. They have continued to our days in the form of ruins and mounds that enabled archaeologists to mark routes along Inner Tien Shan.

**Kochkor.** The site Kochkor (Tortkul) is located to the south-west from the village Kum-Dobo on the left bank of a river with the same name. It is rectangular in plan, dimensions: 400x800 m and identifiable with the well known medieval town Kadjingarbashi. This name is first referred to in “Zain I-Ahbar” by Gardizi (1050-1052). It says that in the end of summer 992 Bogra-khan upon his return to his headquarters Balasagun from Bukhara, en route to Kashgar unexpectedly died in a locality Kochkor-Bashi ([Bartold, 1996, p.300]. Note that “Divan lugat-at turk” by Mahmud Kashgari reports that caravans from Balasaguna, going down from the pass Zambi-Art (Shamsi), get directly to the town Kadjingarbashi. At one time, A.N.Bernstam identified this town with the site Shirdakbek in the valley of the river Alabuka, however, later on some researchers suggested a new wording “Kochkor-Bashi” (“Koch-ar-Bashi”) and its localization in the Kochkor valley [Bartold, 1968, p.75; Karayev, 1983, p.227; Urstanbekov, Choroyev, 1990, p.85].

**Koshoy-Korgon.** The site Koshoy-Korgon is situated in the center of At-Bashi valley, 12 km to the west from a regional center with the same name. Its ruins are identifiable with the historical town Atbash which is mentioned in “Kitab al-masalik va-l-mamalik” by Ibn Hordadbek. In turn, Ibn al-Asir reports that in 482/1089 Yakub-tegin was ruler of the town. Mohammad Haydar, author of “Tarih-i-Rashidi” points out that “during mutinies in Mogolistan in the mid – 15 century some emirs pronounced themselves as rulers of different regions, built fortresses and made plundering raids. One of them Mir Mohammad-shah settled down in Atbash... Another Mir Kerim-Berdi “built a fortress on top of hill in the region of Andijan and Fergana, within the bounds of Mogolistan in a locality Alabuga...” [Bartold, 1996, p.414, Karayev, 2004, p.92]. Archaeologically, the monument was first explored by A.N.Berstam.



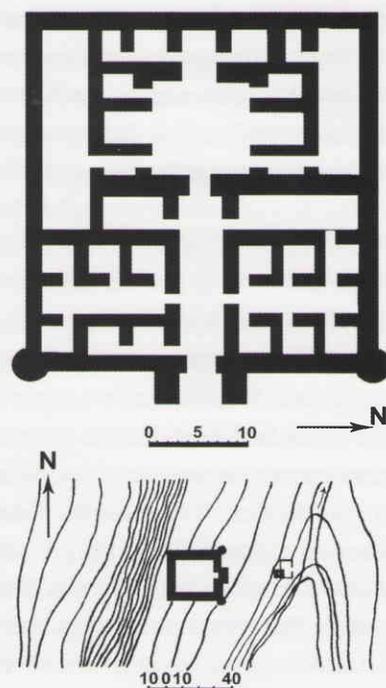
*Map of the site Koshoy Korgon*

He supposed that the emergence of the town in the 7-8 centuries was attributable to “Sogdian masters”. He interpreted Koshoy-Korgon from functional point of view as fortress-town, headquarters of Turkic rulers with their tents intended to shelter local residents and their cattle during the war [Bernastam, 1998, p.67].

The monument is a building, quadrangular in plan, dimensions 245x250 m. Walls and towers of the building were made of paks and raw brick. At present, their height ranges between 4 and 8 m. Outwardly, the site is girdled by a ditch, 10-15 m wide and 3-4 m deep. Initially, the site had U-shaped entry in the southern wall protected by towers in front of gates. To all appearances these were single gates to penetrate the town. Note that U-shaped entries are typical for early medieval towns and settlements of Kyrgyzstan and the Central Asia; however, it had continued to the 10-12 centuries. In the end of the 20 century, specialists specified data on fortification and topography of the site and its districts, carried out excavation operations. Archaeologists revealed buildings of palace type, living and industrial quarters. Floors of the buildings are wattle and daub or cobbled. Plastered walls preserved traces of paintings in blue, white, yellow and red paints. Fragments of products manufactured of clay, bone, stone and metal, as well as adornments of nephritis and mother-of-pearl [Maskalev, 1978, p.50-54; 2002; 215-240; Fedorov 1987, p.5-28; 1989; 6-21].

Of particular interest is a censer found in the north-eastern part of the site. It has ball-shaped case once resting on a tray and an engobe of white-pink color. A distinctive feature of the censer is two crowns, internal bent outside, external, in the form of wide collar with trumpet-shaped extension upwards. Figure and round holes are made on vessel's shoulders. Under the orifice there are two handles in the form of lion' or dragon's heads. A central ornamental belt is located on a case with five stamped medallions surrounded by concentric circles. In the center there is a bas-relief of aged man with clear traits in the crown. On his neck there is a grivna (?); in one ear – a compound earring. A space between medallions is filled with vegetation ornament; bottom part of the vessel is designed as leaves of acanthus, with tops down. Perhaps, the vessel was manufactured in Sogd and brought to Atbash by traders; it goes back to the end of the 7-beginning of the 8 centuries [Moskalev, Soltobayev, Omurbekov, 2007]. The numismatic materials include coins minted in the Eastern Turkestan, Bukhara and various mint places of Karakhanides.

**Caravanserai Tashrabat** is distinguished by the fact that it was made of stone; located 70 km to the west from Koshoy-Korgon, on the bank of the tribute of the river with the same name. The building, square in plan, is built of roughly processed slag on a special ground on the slope of the hill. Its façade looks eastwards. In the fronton of vaulted niche of portal there is a single entrance flanked by  $\frac{3}{4}$  decorative towers, 2,8 m in diameter. Excavations of Tashrabat provided a small quantity of archaeological material, largely earthenware. The whole complex of crockery of local production from the 8 to 12 centuries



*Caravanserai Tashrabat*

is dated to the pre-Mongolian time. Views on functional designation of the building differed. Some researchers consider it to be a Christian monastery; others believe it is a caravanserai. However, archaeological explorations did not reveal evidences to associate it with Christianity. General layout of the structure typical for caravanserai is in favor of the second assumption.

**Caravanserai Manakeldi** (local name Chaldivar) is made of combined brickwork and pabs, square in plan. As a whole, the very design of the structure with four ayvans, a square courtyard and long storehouses – stalls make it possible to consider it as a classic specimen of caravanserai. The monument is dated to the 10-12 centuries both by architectural parallels, building materials and erection devises and finally by its ceramic complexes. Finds discovered on the site include several fragments of red-engobed glossy ceramics that gave cause to A.N.Bernstam to date the structure by the 7-9 centuries through associating it with direct impact of plain Fergana [Bernstam, 1998].

**Shirdakbek.** The site Shirdakbek has first been thoroughly described by A.N.Bernstam. Later archaeological excavations helped to identify some interesting details; however, they remain unpublished and just partially referred to in subsequent publications [Kolchenko, 2000; Kolchenko, 2003-a]. Modern researchers K.Sh.Tabaldiyev and E.H.Khorosh also visited this monument and monitored its state. The site is square in plan, dimensions: 125x125 m; with strong corner towers, 14 m in diameter. Entries to the town are located in the southern and eastern walls between large pylons. A ditch, 0,8 m deep (in its present state), about 20 m wide, encircles the fortress walls. The cultural layer of the site is not more than 0,6 m. Finds are monotonous, consist of ceramic, mud and burnt brick and bones of animals. Building activity is traced in one excavation place only – in the south-eastern corner of the site. Also, half of a Karakhanide coin in bad state of preservation was found here. Observations over fortification structures, sections of the eastern and western walls, clearing of cracks in two towers show that the fortification operated for a long period of time.

Fergana (Northern) road mattered most for the early stage of this international route. Note that initial section passed through the kingdom Davan which is localized in the Fergana valley [Bartold, 1966, p.527; Bernstam, 1997, p.247; Gorbunova, 1986, p.158-168]. It was the first Central Asian possession where Chzan Tsyau arrived after his escape from the Hun prison in 128 BC; from there he was taken to Kangyuy. A very brief period of the history of this kingdom (2-1 centuries BC) is detailed in the Chinese chronicles. They described Davan as a large farming country with 70 large and small towns. There was also cattle-breeding that laid an emphasis on breeding pedigree horses. Among objects on the Fergana route there are ruins of the one of three Davan towns – Yu-Chen, the easternmost urban center of the state. Researchers traditionally localize it near Uzgen [Bernstam, 1997, p.249-254]. According to Moslem authors that described destinations from the west to the east, Uzgen (Uzgend) was reputed to be a frontier town, behind which there began lands of Turks-nomads that had not adopted Islam so far (Hordadbek, Kudam et al). From here, one of the offshoots of the Fergana route followed upstream the river Zhazi via passes Zhaza and Kokard (Kugart), valleys Makmala, Manakeldy, Ala-Buki, deep regions of Inner Tien Shan and the southern Issyk Kul region and further to the Eastern Turkestan and China. In the end of the 10 century, during the expansion of the state of Karakhanides, Uzgen, for a short period of time, became a capital of the western part of the Empire and then remained a center of the Fergana district for a long time. There is information that Kara-Kidany kept their treasury in this region. It suffered the Mongolian invasion as well;

yet, it kept on functioning in the times of Timur and Babur, however, it is deficient in the list of 8 towns of Fergana in the end of the 15-16 centuries. Of interest is the very location of the town on right, higher flood land terrace, on 4 hills, total area 72,5 he, stretched out along Kara-Darya. The third hill with its defensive work acted as a citadel, the rest was shahristans. A rabad was located lower to occupy a considerable area between the two rivers. According to V.D.Goryacheva, an area of the town within the bounds of outward moats reached 30 sq. km in the pre-Mongolian period [Goryacheva, 2010, p.58]. Also, three mausoleums and a minaret rise above here known under the name of Uzgen architectural complex. All the three buildings are made of burnt brick, attached to each other and stretched along one line with facades oriented westwards. The scientific literature conventionally titles them as Middle, Northern and Southern. The earliest mausoleum (Middle) is dated to the 11-12 centuries. Broader belts of inscriptions in kuf, nash, suls script and vegetation ornament give weight to the fact that the last representatives of the Uzgen branch of the dynasty of Karakhanides and their commander lie here. Between a minaret and burial chambers there were found remains of a monumental building of burnt brick of later period with façade oriented northwards. Perhaps, these were ruins of a madrasah of which Jamal ad-Karshi wrote in the end of the 13 century. Remains of a pottery of the end of the 12 century with four rectangular kilns were discovered to the north from the complex.

**Osh.** The Osh oasis situated to the west from Uzgen was a key point on the north-eastern segment of the Silk Road. In the ancient times, it was a center of breeding “celestial horses” of Davan. Of particular interest here is Ayrimach-Too (Surottuu-Tash). The point is about a lime range of latitudinal orientation with its southern spur comprising of five tops, the four of which are on the territory of the village Kyzyl-Kyshtak. Above 80 drawings, mainly of horses were identified on the eastern, south eastern and southern slopes [Zadneprovskiy, 1962; Amanbayeva in co-authorship, 2006, p.257-267]. Sometimes, a relief ring or semi-ring is cut on torso and crupper which reaffirms there cult-magic significance. Researchers are unanimous in identifying the style of depiction as a local peculiarity of the Osh oasis and adjoining valleys of Aravana and Obshirsay. The monument also reveals various cult places in the form of bowl-shaped depressions, holes and grooves with traces of polishing. In all probability, the sanctuary came to shape a little later as compared with neighboring Sulayman-Too, most probably, in the early Iron Age as evidenced by depictions of deer and feline predators performed in animal’s style. During the Davan period it assumed a narrowly specialized form related to the cult of horse. To judge by the whereabouts, scale and number of drawings and cult places, it was undoubtedly a central sanctuary.

Ruins, located in the south-east of oasis, are Ak-Buura site [Amanbayeva, Abdulloev, 2000, p.44-45]. At present, there is a citadel and a shahristan, area of 7 he. A cult room with hearth – altar and rooms of various functional designations, as well as a part of the courtyard were uncovered on the site. Of interest are fragments of a ceramic vessel with depictions of horses and other animals performed with the help of circles. A part of the fortified wall with towers of rectangular form was cleared on the citadel, including a prestigious room with hearth for heating and subsidiaries. The town ceased to exist in the 8 century and, perhaps, moved downstream the river Ak-Buure to Suleyman-Too.

The well known monument Safid-Bulan is situated on this segment of the Silk Road. It is on the north-eastern outskirts of the village of Jalal-Abad region with the same name at the foot

of Mt. Archa-Mazar. It is a complex of chronically different erections built on a cultural layer of the medieval Mazar site. The historical context of the complex emergence is associated with the epoch of Islam dissemination in the north-east of the valley where this belief established itself in the 9-10 centuries. Just one structure known in the research literature as a mausoleum Shah Fazil has continued to our days. Of great interest is a numerous collection of tombstones – Kayraks discovered on a medieval necropolis. This collection provides valuable information about social composition and religious status of the deceased that include names of natives of other regions of the Central Asia. By its composition, constructive devices and particularly ornamental-decorative peculiarities the monument takes a particular place not only in the architecture of Kyrgyzstan of the Karakhanide epoch but also the Central Asian region as a whole.

To sum up, it is essential to note that most medieval monuments of Kyrgyzstan on the Silk Road had been used for a long span of time. A border between settled and nomadic worlds crossed these monuments. Note that all of them performed certain administrative functions. Testifying to great economic potential of some monuments (Uzgen) is active coinage. As viewed by researchers, the Uzgen architectural complex is an eloquent testimony to the development of domical-portal architecture, the décor of which is reputed to be “encyclopedia of ornament” of the Karakhanid period. The monuments and sites above located on the Fergana route and marking it have been put on the tentative list of Kyrgyzstan to be included in the UNESCO serial nomination on the Silk Road.