

Buddhism in Kashgar: An Interpretation of the Ancient Cultural Landscape

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Abstract;

The cultural landscape of a place describes everything about the culture; the evolution, the morphology and the characteristics, along with everything else, sometimes explicitly and more often implicitly. It reveals the expressions and configurations of the culture, self-identity and its distinctiveness. It also reveals the narratives of the place or a space and its history, in addition to the cultural continuity and discontinuity. Nonetheless, it also explains the phenomena of spatial interaction or more accurately the processes of cultural transmission or cultural diffusion.

The theme of this research is the Interpretation of the cultural landscape of Kashgar. It explains the role of culture in shaping the landscapes and interprets the significance of the ancient landscape in the cultural history of Kashgar.

The morphology of the ancient cultural landscape of Kashgar bears the imprints of Buddhist culture and tradition. This research evaluates the integrity of the landscape and (re)evaluates the role of Buddhism in the creation of the ancient cultural landscapes of Kashgar.

The expressive form of this landscape includes the ruins of ancient monuments (stupas and monasteries). These ruins are just a few of the elements visible in the historic landscape. This research has focused on the character of these historical landscapes. However, much of the character of the historic landscape has been lost or modified; the existing features are sufficient to reveal the cultural value of the landscape. It helps to explain the importance (significance) of these landscapes.

The present research also interprets the existence of these stupas and monasteries; how it come into existence and what it reveals about its Buddhist history. It also interprets the historic events and activities associated with the development of the Buddhist cultural landscape. Therefore, the spatial configuration or the location of Buddhist stupas and monasteries has been evaluated not in isolation but in terms of cultural interaction.

The study has also touched upon the process of cultural transmission or cultural diffusion (the movement of people and the flow culture).

Key Words; Buddhism, Kashgar, Cultural Landscape, Cultural Diffusion.

Introduction;

The western regions of China have always been a special geographical location in Chinese history. The city or the state is known to have existed since antiquity. Due to its location it always occupied its significance. In the historical past also, it remained a 'frontier state'.

The existence of Kashgar can be traced back to antiquity. Kashgar was an important city on the Silk Route. It is situated on the main meeting point of most of the main communication routes between China and the centres of western Central Asia. During the ancient period it was an important centre of commerce in Eastern Central Asia. For centuries Kashgar has also served as an important cultural centre between two great civilisations; India and China. As a city it played a significant role in the cultural history of the region. It served in the spread or transmission of Buddhist culture to the northern and southern states of the Tarim basin. (Bagchi, 1955)

Little is known about the Buddhism of Kashgar in its early period. How and when Indian culture was embraced by the inhabitants of Kashgar is not yet known. But, Kashgar represent one of the major and earliest entry points for Buddhist into China. Much before the fourth century Buddhism was firmly established in Kashgar.

The cultural landscape of a place describes everything about the culture; the evolution, the morphology and the characteristics, along with everything else. The morphology of the ancient cultural landscape of Kashgar bears the imprints of Buddhist culture and tradition. This research evaluates the integrity of the landscape and (re)evaluates the role of Buddhism in the creation of the ancient cultural landscapes of Kashgar.

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Objective of the Study;

In present times Kashgar (Kashi) is the most important state in Xinjiang region (Uyghur Autonomous Region) of China. Its closest borders are with the republics of Kyrgyzstan and

Tajikistan. It also has close links with Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is widely accepted as the Cultural Capital of Uyghurs.

The cultural landscape of a place describes everything about the culture; the evolution, the morphology and the characteristics, along with everything else, sometimes explicitly and more often implicitly. It reveals the expressions and configurations of the culture, self-identity and its distinctiveness. It also reveals the narratives of the place or a space and its history, in addition to the cultural continuity and discontinuity. Nonetheless, it also explains the phenomena of spatial interaction or more accurately the processes of cultural transmission or cultural diffusion. The cultural landscape of Kashgar bears the imprints of Buddhist culture and tradition. The aim of this research paper is to recreate the cultural geography of Kashgar. The main objective of this research is to interpret the cultural landscape of Kashgar.

Source of Information;

The most important source of information about the existence of Buddhism in Kashgar are the records of Chinese Pilgrims who travelled to India and passed through this region. They recorded the actual condition of Buddhism in the region. Besides, giving the accounts of number of monasteries and the monks living in those monasteries, they have also described about the cultural landscape of the region. We also get a lot of information about the activities of these Buddhist monks from the Chinese source materials. There are other evidences from the archaeological findings of Aurel Stein and Paul Pelliot. These archaeological findings of stupas and also cave temples indicate the flourishing state of Buddhism in Kashgar. However, these ruins are just a few of the elements visible in the historic landscape. This research has focused on the character of these historical landscapes.

Methodology;

Cultural landscape is a cultural expression. The interpretation of the cultural landscape lies in the theoretical realm of cultural geography. Any introduction to Cultural Geography of a place or space and landscape provides an understanding of the spatial distributions of cultures and the processes that led to these distributions. cultural geography is concerned not simply with describing the patterns but also with analysing how they came about and what they mean. The present study also includes the (re)configuration of history or historical geography.

An interdisciplinary approach has been applied to interpret the existence and expression of Buddhist cultural landscape of Kashgar. Documentation and interpretation of the ruins of ancient monuments (stupas and monasteries) has dominated this research. Thus, it explores the cultural space of Kashgar. It cannot be seen as mere deductions but an interpretation of the most significant symbols of Buddhism (stupas and monasteries). Beyond simply locating and describing the Buddhist stupas it is also a historical analysis of the cultural process.

At theoretical level the prime concern of this research is cultural transmission or cultural diffusion. Therefore, the present research also addresses the movement of people and the flow culture or language. There is also considerable analysis of the cultural consequences of cultural transmission or cultural diffusion.

Through this analysis it becomes possible to take up some key questions concerning the existence of Buddhist cultural landscape of Kashgar.

The Spatial Narratives;

The place name contains a natural and a cultural meaning. It also contains knowledge about the cultural history of a place. Indisputably the name has the ability to present the cultural heritage inherent in the place. The Sanskrit name for Kashgar was Shrikriti (Glory of Fortune). The name has its own justification. It was a prosperous oasis and for centuries was a popular caravan stop for those travelling to the Silk Road. The meaning or the name of the place reveals its value (economic fortune).

Kashgar has been referred in the Chinese sources with various names: in the Dynastic Annals from the Han to the Tang periods it was known as Shulei. A variant of Shulei is Shalei as given by SongGun, Kumarajiva and Dharmagupta. Fahien (Faxian) alone gives another form of the name as Kiecha. Interestingly, different variants of Kiasha are also found as KiaShe and KiaSha. Hiuan tsang (Xuan Zang) and some of his contemporaries mention it as KiaSha. It refers to the ancient communities living in this region. It cannot be denied that the people of the region were known in India as Khasa. (Bagchi, 1955)

It has been suggested that the country is mentioned in geography of Ptolemy as 'Kasia Regio' or Kasiaori. (Geography, Chapter 15.3A) (Samuel Beal, 2014) It is only after the Muslim conquest that the name Kashgar or Qashqar came in use. (Bagchi, 1955) This name has a physiographic significance. Kashgar is a river in this region. The place name may have derived from it.

The Political Fortune of Kashgar;

All throughout history, the political fortune of Kashgar has shifted in many hands. During the mid of the 1st century BC. it became a Chinese protectorate. But whenever Chinese control became weaker, it came under the domination of Yarkand and Khotan. With the resumption of Chinese interest in the 'Western Regions', it came under Chinese sovereignty. (Rhie, 2007) From Han to Tang times the Chinese territory of Kashgar was known as shuie.

Kashgar was also confronted by powers from the west. In the 107-113 AD. the Kushans apparently controlled the Kashgar. It is believed to have contributed to the introduction of Buddhism into Kashgar. (Rhie, 2007) In the same period, Buddhism become the dominant religion. It dominated the cultural landscape of the region for the next 1000 years. The

splendid Buddhist culture shaped Kashgar into one of the Buddhist cultural centres in the Western Regions.

Geography, Space and Place;

The distinctiveness of Kashgar is its location. The position of the Kashgar oasis determined the geographical significance of the city. Kashgar is located at the edge of the Central Asian hinterland. It is situated at a fertile oasis watered by the Kashgar River and by several springs. The landscape of the Oasis of Kashgar allowed the existence and survival of an ancient civilisation. It is one of the oldest inhabited cities in Central Asia (Chinese Turkestan).

The geography affected the fortune of Kashgar. Throughout its history the Oasis of Kashgar is known to have been fertile and prosperous. It was endowed with rich natural resources. Surrounded by the Tian Shan Mountains, the Pamir range and the vast Taklamakan Desert, the idea of marginality runs through the geography of Kashgar. But it never remained an isolated region.

It was situated at the main communication route between eastern and western Central Asia. The high mountain passes in the Tian Shan and the Pamir allowed the caravan trade to flourish. The Silk Road transects landscapes to connect places, transit goods and peoples and spread interaction.

It was situated at the junction of the southern and northern Silk Road. It has been a major factor in its spatial relations with neighbouring countries. Consequently, Kashgar evolved into an important hub of cultural and commercial activities on the ancient Silk Road.

The Ancient Settlement;

There were three ancient urban settlements in Kashgar; Shule in the north of modern Kashgar, Khanoi near Topa Tim and Eskishahar, in the south of modern Kashgar. The scattered nature of these three urban areas suggests that it was a scattered settlement.

The Ancient Settlement of Kashgar

Shule	In the first half of the 1st century Buddhism was introduced to Shule. It is well verified that Shule was one of the regions where Buddhism was firstly introduced. Moreover, the maturity of the Buddhist statues and murals art inside the cave is the sign of the consolidation of Buddhism in Shule. (Wenyi Xia, 2017)
Khanoi or Hanoi	Khanoi or Hanoi is a site of a Tang dynasty walled city. It may have been the original site of capital of kashgar or Sule (as it was called at that time). The ancient settlement of Khanoi has a thousand years old Buddhist ruins. Buddhist relics are still be found here.

	In the middle of 10 century AD., when Islamism was formally introduced into Kashgar, Buddhism staged out of the historical arena. The city appears to have been abandoned in the 12th century.
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Space Relations;

The cultural area of Kashgar covers all the surrounding territories of Kashgar. The historical importance of Kashgar has primarily been linked to its significance as a trading centre. Being the meeting point of the various roads of the Silk Route, it became one of the most important centres of trade in Central Asia.

Kashgar was situated at the junction of the two principle routes. The Silk Road bifurcated from Kashgar; the western route continued over the Roof of the World (Pamirs) towards Samarkand, Bukhara and Merv. The southern route turned to Tashkurghan to cross the Karakoram Pass and then on to the great Taxila and Gandhara.

In addition, it was also connected to the main land of China. In the east also, Kashgar was situated at the junction of two routes; one leading towards South-East i.e. Khotan region and the other one towards the North-East i.e. the Kucha region. (Bagchi, 1955) Remarkably, it was important terminal on the Silk Roads in the historical past. It has always remained an important commercial centre. Culturally too, it was an important centre. It is recognised for its early Buddhist stupas. (Rhie, 2007) During the ancient period Kashgar played a significant role in the spread of Buddhism.

Diffusion of Buddhism and the Spread of Religion

Kashgar was a multicultural society even during the time when Buddhism was prevailing in the kingdom. It included Zoroastrians, Hindus, Christianity and people following shamanism and animistic beliefs. (Marika Vicziany and Di Castro, 2015)

Kashgar was probably one of the earliest Buddhist sites of Central Asia. It was the possible entry point for Buddhism in to Chinese Turkistan. It is commonly thought that Buddhism was introduced in to Kashgar from northwest India. The diffusion of Buddhism in this region followed two paths: from Bactria to Kashgar and further east; and from north western India and Kashmir to Khotan and the southern oases of East Turkestan. (Litvinsky, 1996)

The shortest route between India and Kashgar passed through the Upper valley of Indus river. This route fallowed the valley of the Gilgit and reached Tashkurghan where both the routes met. The transmission of religion took place along the ancient trade route leading to the Wakhan Corridor (Afghanistan) and then across Pamir and finally to Shule (Kashgar). It traversed through the Khunjerab pass. (Wenyi Xia, 2017)

It is believed that an eminent monk named Vairocana from Kashmir came to this region in the 1st century BC (About 73 BC). He spread Buddhism to the Kingdom of Khotan and in Shule (Kashgar). This was more than one century before the introduction of Buddhism in to China (during Han Dynasty 58-75 DC). (Wenyi Xia, 2017)

In fact, Buddhism was not widely accepted in the beginning when it was introduced into Shule (Kashgar). Its spread was limited by linguistic barrier (language problem). During the initial period even, there were no written Buddhist texts. The missionary work was carried out mainly by individual monk. They use to walk among people and preach it orally. So, Buddhists monks had to memorize the Doctrine of Buddha by heart. In addition, there were no permanent adherents. There was not even fixed preaching site. Therefore, the religion had little influence on the local. (Wenyi Xia, 2017)

Development of Buddhism in Shule (Kashgar);

In the first half of the 1st century (during the Kushan period) Buddhism began to be actively propagated in East Turkestan. During the same period Buddhism was introduced to Shule. During that period AnGuo was the king of Shule (Kashgar). Possibly he facilitated the spread of Buddhist teachings. (Di Castro, 2008) As recent research revealed, during the beginning of the 2nd century Buddhism got wider acceptance due to the enthusiasm of Chenpan, the king of Shule (Kashgar). (Wenyi Xia, 2017)

Initially, Buddhism prevailed in royal court and among the noble. While among the masses it coexisted with nature worship such as Shamanism. Later on, Buddhism developed as national religion. During the same period Buddhist cultural landscapes evolved in this area. Interactions between people and their cultural landscape led to the diffusion of religion. And thus, Shule (Kashgar) became the first area of Western Regions to be regard as the Land of Buddha.

Exchange of Knowledge and Scriptures;

In the initial years of development of Buddhism in Kashgar was primarily associated with Buddhist learning. Indian scholars frequently used to go to Kashgar. Kumarajiva; a Buddhist monk from Kucha came to Kashgar on his return journey from Kashmir, during the last decade of the 4th century. He stayed there for nearly a year. There he worshipped the Alms Bowl of Buddha and studied the Abhidharma. This indicates that the Spirit of wisdom and the Spirit of Knowledge was very high in Kashgar. There were very competent scholars of the Abhidharma. (Bagchi, 1955)

Kumarajiva studied four Vedas, five sciences, Brahmanical Shastras and also Astronomy. If this account is true then we must believe that Kashgar was some sort of centre of Brahmanical studies too. (Bagchi, 1955) During that period Kashgar had developed in to an important centre of Sanskrit studies.

A few years earlier a great Indian scholar, Buddhayasas of Kashmir, after travelling a great deal, reached Kashgar. Buddhayasas was of great help to Kumarajiva in his studies at Kashgar. He taught Vinaya to Kumarajiva. (Moti Chandra, 2011) Buddhayasas stayed in Kashgar for long. He continued to exercise a great influence on the local king. (Bagchi, 1955)

During the stay of Kumarajiva, the sons of the king of So kiu (Karghalik-Yarkand) came to him for ordination. They were Suryabhadra and Suryasoma. Before taking the route for Kucha Kumarajiva taught them Batastra and Madhyamikabastara. (Bagchi, 1955) A master of Tripitaka named Hikien requested the king to retain Kumarajiva permanently in Kashgar. Although this could not be done as the king of Kucha was pressing Kumarajiva to return to Kucha.

Many more Buddhist scholars and monks passed through Kashgar, on their way to China. They often remained in Kashgar for a longer period. They contributed to the enormous intellectual and cultural process that paved the way for the second diffusion of Buddhism. Under their influence even new monasteries, temples and stupas cropped up in Kashgar.

Fahien (Faxian) visited the country towards the closing years of the 4th century. He found Buddhism in a very prosperous condition. He also found the existence of various Buddhist relics, including the Alms-bowl and the tooth relic of Buddha. These were preserved in a Stupa. During his visit there were more than two thousand monks. They were strict followers of the Buddhist discipline. The king of the country was also a devout follower of Buddha. Other Chinese pilgrims, CheMong (404), Fayong and Taoyo (420), who visited the country soon after Fahien, also testify to Fahien. (Bagchi, 1955)

In 644 A.D, in his return journey from India, Xuan Zang passed through Shule. He has given a more detailed description of the condition of Buddhism in the country. According to him the people of the land were sincere followers of Buddhism. They piously adhere to Buddhist doctrine. They used to take keen interest in every activity and Buddhist ceremony. There were several hundreds of monasteries in the region with nearly 10000 monks. (Bagchi, 1955) Many of them could recite the Buddhist texts. They were well versed of even the entire Tripitaka and the Vibhanga. This literature was in Sanskrit.

It is evident from the reports of Xuan Zang that Sanskrit language was seriously cultivated by the local Buddhist scholars. Xuan Zang also reported that there were specialist libraries housing many Buddhist manuscripts. (Marika Vicziany and Di Castro, 2015)

Almost towards the close of the Buddhist period another Indian scholar Dharmasandra visited Kashgar. He was a Buddhist monk of Magadha. He had gone to China in 730 AD. from Kucha. On his return journey to India he passed through different countries ultimately reaching Kashgar in 741 A.D. On account of political unrest in that area it was impossible for him to reach India. He ultimately settled in Khotan where he died in 743 A.D. (Bagchi, 1955) The last

Chinese pilgrim to pass through Kashgar was Wukong, who travelled back to China about 786 A.D. (Bagchi, 1955)

Buddhism began to decline in the 8th century after reaching its peak in the end of the 7th century. In 960 AD, Karakhanid Empire of Kashgar declared Islam as the National Religion. After that Buddhism withdrew from the stage of religious history of Shule. (Wenyi Xia, 2017)

Interpretation of the Cultural Landscape;

Cultures are geographically expressed. It is also certain that culture and cultural ideas certainly flow across borders. The cultural landscape of Kashgar reveals that Kashgar was probably instrumental in the introduction and diffusion of Buddhism into the Tarim basin.

The Script and Language; Although we do not have much definite information on the language of ancient Kashgar. In all likelihood, through Buddhism, the language of Kashgar must have undergone a deep influence from India as it experienced constant literary influence from India.

Signs of borrowing are often clearer on texts. Indian writing was prevalent in Kashgar. Kharosthi was adapted in the writing. Another form of ancient Indian writing which found its way into East Turkestan and Central Asia was Brahmi. (Litvinsky, 1996)

Up to the 3rd century Kharosthi was also prevalent in some parts of the region. In the early period of history this script was probably also known in Kashgar. The Indian historians believe that Brahmi was introduced in the region in the 4th or 5th centuries when Kharosthi went out of use. (Bagchi, 1955) The recent archaeological findings from Kashgar have revealed many clay tablets and birch bark manuscripts with Brahmi script, predominantly reflecting Buddhist preaching. (Marika Vicziany and Di Castro, 2015)

Sacred Space; The existence of hundreds of years of Buddhist culture has left behind a rich archaeological heritage in Kashgar. The hidden treasures of Kashgar remain just hidden or in a few cases only recently discovered. A number of old Buddhist stupas are still found at various places around Kashgar. Although other antiquities are very scarce in Kashgar. (Bagchi, 1955)

Although different Buddhist structures of Kashgar are seriously eroded and covered by sands or destroyed as a result of a long history of continuous invasion and warfare, there are few monuments spread over the large territory. (Marika Vicziany and Di Castro, 2015) Despite their weathered condition, these stupas reveal too much about the past glory of the region. (Rhie, 2007)

Stupas of Kashgar;

The Buddhist sites of Kashgar includes a series of scattered stupas and monasteries. A group of monumental stupas are located to the north, northwest and northeast of present Kashgar. It includes the stupa of Mori Tim and Topa Tim stupa and the ancient ruins scattered around

the site of Khanui. ('Tim' is the designation given to all ruined mounds in Kashgar) There is another Buddhist site near Yawaluk or Dakiyanus. It is the cave of the 'Three Immortal Buddhas. (Marika Vicziany and Di Castro, 2015) Though unable to find the exact position of the early capital of Kashgar, Aurel Stein and Paul Pelliot have reported about the antiquity of these stupas. These sites were most likely also the centre of human settlements.

Stupas

Name of Stupa	Characteristics	Explorer of Stupa	Period of Existence
Topa Tim	The oldest stupa in the Kashgar region	First explored by Aurel Stein in 1900	Dated to the early 2nd century AD.
Kurghan Tim	The largest mound in the region. The stupa has a grandiose size.	Explored by Aurel Stein in 1900	The stupa belongs to the 2nd century AD.
Mauri Tim	One of the best-preserved stupas in the region. It has great historical value.	Explored by Aurel Stein and Paul Pelliot	Built and enlarged between 5th and 10th centuries

after Jonathan Tucker

Topa Tim; In the northeast of Kashgar several major stupas existed near the village of Khanui. This site is locally believed to be a Han Chinese Settlement. In 1900 Stein found a ruined stupa which was locally called Topa Tim. It is the mound of a 28 feet tall stupa. Stein also found remains of a monastery next to it.

This stupa is believed to be the oldest stupas in this part of China and Central Asia. (Marika Vicziany and Di Castro, 2015). It may be dated to the early 2nd century AD. Its shape generally accords with the early form of stupa form of the Gandharan region.

Kurghan Tim; The remains of another stupa have been discovered from the northwest of Kashgar. It is known as Kurghan Tim. It was also discovered in 1900. The credit for its discovery also goes to Stein. It is the largest of all the stupas discovered in the Kashgar area. It probably belongs to the 2nd century AD.

Though it is badly damaged, still it is an impressive sight. The remarkable feature of this stupa was its grandiose size. The height of stupa was 85 feet. Although the present state of the stupa is too ruined to exactly determine its original shape and size. This was clearly a grand stupa that was apparently the largest stupa in this region.

Kizil Debe; Another stupa was situated south of Kashgar. It is known as the stupa of Kizil Debe. Although this stupa resembles to Kurghan Tim stupa but it is smaller in size. Its height is only 27 feet. A smaller circular mound has also been discovered nearby which may have been a shrine related to the stupa.

The shape of this stupa has an interesting similarity with some of the stupas at Taxila. It has some small stupas near the great stupa, similar to the Dharmarajika or the main stupas at Kalawan, Kunala, Mohra Moradu.

Mauri Tim; Mauri Tim is a monumental Buddhist site. It is one of the best-preserved stupas of Kashgar region. It is situated in the north of Khanui. It was site 're-discovered' in the early 20th century (in 1900) by Aurel Stein and Paul Pelliot. The Mauri Tim stupa is fortunately a large stupa which still survives in relatively good form. It is one of the most significant early monuments of Buddhism, east of the Pamirs.

The sacred area consists of two major monuments and other minor ruined structures. It is situated on a raised ground. Although its extant is only 38 feet, it appears to be much taller than its size. It is visible from a long distance. It has a three-story base. The stupa had the relic chamber similar to the stupas at Taxila. It was probably related to the architectural traditions of Gandhara.

There are few other structures with associated purposes; perhaps worship, meditation or residence. (Marika Vicziany and Di Castro, 2015) On the basis of the site and its shape it can be concluded that the pagoda enjoyed a high position in the historical past. It may have been the special temple for the royals of Shule.

In form and proportion, the Mauri Tim stupa has a remarkable correspondence with the stupa at Kara-Tepe. This striking correspondence in general form suggests a possible shared dating for Mauri Tim and the Kara-Tepe. (2nd-3rd century A.D.) It is the last Buddhist remains in Shule. Its historical mission ended with the official introduction of Islam to Kashgar. (Wenyi Xia, 2017)

The Stupa at Khakanning-shahri (Tegurman); In 1906 Stein discovered another stupa in north of Kashgar. The area is known as Khakanning-shahri. (it was called Tegurman by Pelliot). It is situated near the caves of Och Merwan.

The height of the eroded remains of the stupa is 32 feet. It was similar to the stupa located at Mauri Tim. Both these stupas represent a development of the 2nd-3rd century. The form of this stupa seems to accord quite closely with that of the reliquary stupa. It is similar to the stupas of the Gandharan as well as the Swat region.

Three Immortals Cave; With the advent of Buddhist statues, Buddhist hermitage (vihara) with wall paintings appeared in this region. These wall paintings not only propagate Buddhist ideology but also provide sites for Buddhists monks for seclusion and penance. (Wenyi Xia,

2017) With the prosperity of Buddhism Buddhists caves with Buddhist paintings appeared in Kashgar. Recently three caves were rediscovered in the Kashgar region. These were historically significant inhabited caves. These caves were dug during the Han period and is the oldest cave remained in the western regions of China.

The Three Immortals Cave is situated on the wall right to the Boshikeranmu river in the northern Kashgar. These excavate caves are important symbol of the early Buddhism. It shows the tradition of primitive Buddhism that remains to this day. (Wenyi Xia, 2017)

Religion leaves an imprint on landscape. (Park, C. 2004) It is amply proved by the antiquities of large stupas. The discoveries of Buddhist stupas and cave temples underline the importance of Kashgar as a significant Buddhist cultural centre, with a continuous religious and cultural development from the 1st century onwards. Over 600 years from the end of 2nd century to the end of the 8th century, Buddhist temples were established consistently.

Conclusion;

Kashgar was situated at the confluence of the two great civilizations; the ancient Chinese civilization and the ancient Indian civilization. It was one of the earliest Buddhist sites of Central Asia and the possible entry point for Buddhism in to Chinese Turkistan. It had a long and continuous history of religious and cultural development. Buddhism and Buddhist culture shaped the cultural landscape of Kashgar. It is amply proved by the antiquities of large stupas. The discoveries of Buddhist stupas and cave temples underline the importance of Kashgar as a significant Buddhist cultural centre. It also reveals the integration of Kashgar in the cultural realm of Buddhism.

The cultural landscape of Kashgar reveals the history of spatial interaction and the process of cultural transmission or cultural diffusion. It also reveals that Kashgar was instrumental in the introduction and diffusion of Buddhism into the Tarim basin.

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