

sanas, &c. But the debris filling the corners by the side of the main image base, perhaps that of a seated Buddha, had protected some relics of interest. From the southern corner were recovered some fifteen Pōthī leaves inscribed with written or block-printed Hsi-hsia text, besides numerous small fragments; several leaves in Chinese print or writing, also in Tibetan, besides a block-print with small Buddha figures, &c. In the northern corner I found the small well-preserved canvas painting, K.K. I. ii. 01 (Pl. LXXVII), showing a seated Buddha carefully drawn and painted in a style suggesting Tibetan influence. The piece had evidently belonged to the border of a larger composition and been cut out on purpose, probably to serve as a votive offering. There could be little doubt that the leaves of manuscripts and block prints found attached together in the other corner had been originally deposited for the same purpose.

Remains
of Stūpas.

About 70 yards to the south of K.K. I. ii a row of three small Stūpas stood between two badly ruined shrines. The Stūpas had all been broken open, and the shrines showed signs of having been burnt. But in the scanty debris of the one to the west, K.K. I. vii, we found two wooden tablets inscribed with large Chinese characters. Of the structures, probably shrines, that once probably occupied the top of two clay-built terraces farther south it was impossible to trace even the outlines.

Ruins in
SE. portion
of interior.

The south-eastern portion of the interior appeared to have been occupied mainly by Sarais and the like. Two massive enclosures, whose walls of stamped clay were in one case over 20, in the other over 10 feet thick, were found empty even of refuse. Close to the east of the second of these there could be traced, partly covered by heavy accumulations of drift-sand, a large quadrangle about 50 yards square. There were signs that it had been intended originally to enclose it with thick walls of clay. But of this enclosure only the northern face, 20 feet thick, was actually found, while on the other sides only remains of much thinner brick walls survived. Into the western end of the massive clay wall a small room, K.K. I. viii, had been carved, evidently as a shelter.

A Muham-
madan relic.

On clearing away the sand and clay debris that partially filled it, we found a well-preserved Chinese paper document; and a leaf, K.K. viii. 02. a (Pl. CXXXVII), from a Persian manuscript in fairly perfect condition. According to the information kindly furnished by the Department of Oriental Books and MSS. in the British Museum, it treats of the proper times for offering various Moslem prayers and probably dates from the early fourteenth century.

The find of the Persian MS. leaf was of special interest as a confirmation of what we knew from other sources of the early spread eastwards of Muhammadanism; it had already been carried from Central Asia into China by trade relations as well as by religious zeal, before the Mongol conquests brought China into direct connexion with Muhammadan countries of inner and western Asia. The Muhammadan domed tomb outside the south-western corner, which I shall presently describe, had previously convinced me that Khara-khoto, in the days when its Buddhist shrines were still being visited by the pious, also received Muhammadans within its walls.

[Here, too, were found the much-decayed pieces, K.K. I. viii. 01. a-d, of what Dr. Laufer has recognized as a paper-note dated in the Nien-hao Chung-t'ung (A. D. 1260-4), the first regnal period of the Mongol dynasty. Dr. Laufer believes 'this may lay claim to be the oldest paper-note now in existence'.]

Sand-
buried
Sarai.

Adjoining the clay wall on the southern side, brick walls appeared above the sand, indicating the position of rooms. The sand lay to a height of 6 to 7 feet in the room nearest to K.K. I. viii and rose still higher farther east. So when the clearing of that room revealed only straw and horse-dung, I did not proceed farther with a task for which my little band of lazy Mongol diggers was utterly inadequate. Yet who knows what other relics of mediaeval wayfarers may be concealed in this ruined Sarai, where the drift-sand heaped against the town wall behind it has protected its ruins?