

the appearance of a veritable stronghold, was the chief Buddhist sanctuary of the old Turfān capital. Most, if not all, of the shrines and halls appeared to have been previously searched, and diggers for manure had for years past been engaged each winter in removing the debris. Their destructive operations seemed now to be directed chiefly towards this northern end of the town, and had been so extensive during the seven years which had passed since my first visit to the site that I could no longer recognize the position of the two small temple cellas that I had then cleared.^{11a}

Central
shrine and
residences.

Descending from the main gate of II one reaches a ruined shrine which, though not of large proportions, is made conspicuous by its isolated position at a point where roads converge.¹² Its base, 13 feet high, is entirely cut out from the live clay and thus serves as a measure of the immense amount of earthwork involved in the excavation of the roads and of all the basement portions of the dwellings; for all these lie far below the natural surface level of the plateau. The walls of the single cella constituting this shrine and measuring about 44 feet by 34, are built, up to a height of 5 feet, of big blocks of pisé; then of thin layers of stamped clay for another 7½ feet; while on the top there is broken masonry, still rising to about 5 feet, composed of bricks 13" × 7" × 4". Similar methods of construction were to be observed in other buildings of the town. From the temple just mentioned, the exact character of which there is nothing to indicate, the main road continues practically straight for about 300 yards. It is flanked on either side by a confused agglomeration of ruins, most of which clearly belong to dwellings of some size, as seen in Figs. 327, 328. To the west of the road and close to the precipitous edge of the plateau rise several buildings, distinguished by their size and particularly massive construction (Fig. 330). There can be little doubt that they represent palaces or official residences, and I regret that the interference above referred to deprived me of the chance of studying and measuring at least a few of them.

Massive
construction
of walls.

But there are many other ruins in which the dimensions of the rooms or halls and the massive character of the walls lead one to infer that they were houses built and occupied by persons of consequence. In most cases what is left of these buildings comprises only the basements cut out of the live clay and portions of the superstructure of stamped clay so solid as often to be with difficulty distinguished from the natural rock. Yet the walls in many places still rise to 20 feet and more. Openings for doors or windows are seen mainly in the upper portions, along with niches which served as cupboards, and with rows of holes evidently for rafters bearing successive floors. In a region like Turfān, where timber must always have been expensive, the use of this material would alone suffice to indicate some measure of wealth.¹³

Use of
under-
ground
rooms.

Judging from the thickness of the lower walls we seem justified in concluding that they were intended to support upper stories built of bricks and suited for occupation in the winter, when sunshine is eagerly sought for by the people of Turfān. The large underground rooms cut into the natural soil must on the other hand have provided, during the torrid summer months, cool and comfortable quarters such as the modern Turfānlik tries to secure by his vaulted 'kemers', which are necessarily of very modest dimensions and consequently stuffy. How much of ancient Chiao-ho town was in reality built below the natural level of the plateau may be gathered by looking at the latter as it appears in the background of the photograph reproduced in Fig. 329; this shows ruins extending towards the caves of 'Zindān' in the southern part of the town.

Wells found
in ruined
dwellings.

Debris must gradually have filled up many, if not most, of these underground apartments, as the houses were abandoned and the superstructures crumbled away. But the *tōpachis* or diggers

^{11a} See *Serindia*, iii. p. 1168.

¹² See *Serindia*, iii. Figs. 275, 276.

¹³ It is instructive to compare the spacious ruined dwellings of Yār-khoto with the rabbit warrens of narrow

vaulted passages and cellars in which the inhabitants of a small agricultural settlement, like the one represented by the ruins of Chong-Hassār, sought protection from the summer heat; cf. *Ser.* iii. p. 1161, Fig. 265.