

The style of these art relics, with rare exceptions like the wooden statuette of a Lokapala or 'Guardian of the Quarter', which is a fine specimen of T'ang carving, display clearly the predominant influence of Graeco-Buddhist art as developed in the extreme north-west of India. But what imparts a very special interest to most of the stucco sculptures, for the student of the history of this art as transplanted to Central Asia, is the curious tendency which the modelling of the heads (Fig. 127) and the representation of certain attitudes shows towards a treatment reminiscent of Gothic sculpture. It seems the result of a parallel development, all the more curious and noteworthy because wholly unconnected in its course, though perhaps related in its ultimate causes.

It was also on my second expedition that an occasion offered in January 1907 to test the popular belief current in Korla as in other oases along the northern rim of the Tarim basin about 'sand-buried towns', supposed to have been sighted in the desert stretching to the south. It is true that the desert between the line of these oases and the riverine belt of jungle which accompanies the Tarim and its northern affluents from the side of Kucha and Bugur is comparatively narrow and nowhere overrun by high sands. But the belief is all the same widely held.

Persistent affirmations of Korla hunters about walled towns, etc., they had seen induced me to make a short expedition into the unsurveyed desert area between the Inchike and Charchak river-beds to the south-west of Korla. Geographically it was interesting, as showing the changes brought about by shifting river courses. But in the end it revealed that those elaborate reports had no more sub-