

different from the cursive writing seen below a few of the frescoes, and clearly suggested a Sanskrit text.

The little temples so far excavated had shown me something of the cult and art which this sand-buried settlement possessed before its abandonment. But for indications of the conditions of everyday life and for other documentary evidence it was manifest that I should have to turn to remains of a different character. So, on the 22nd of December, I directed my men to the excavation of a structure close by, which by its position and ground-plan as deducible from the arrangement of the wooden posts that were seen sticking out above the sand, appeared to suggest an ancient dwelling-place. It lay about twenty yards to the north-west of the temple-cella last described, just at the northern end of a sand-dune which, with its crest, rose to a height of fully 16 ft. above the original ground level. The bleached trunks of dead fruit-trees, which were visible around where the sand was less high, indicated that this building, together with the cellas already excavated, had stood in the midst of an orchard or garden. The digging started on the west side soon brought to light the top part of massive and fairly well-preserved walls in wood and plaster, belonging to what was evidently the lowest storey of a dwelling-house. The apartment formed by them had been an oblong of 23 by 20 ft., and about 10 ft. high. The photograph at the head of this chapter shows a part of it after excavation.

By noon, at a depth of 2 ft. from the surface, a small scrap of paper showing a few Brahmi characters was found in the loose sand which filled the building. I greeted it with no small satisfaction as a promise of richer finds. In order to stimulate the efforts of my labourers, who, with the sand continually falling in from the side of the adjoining dune, had no easy task in effecting a clearance, I offered a small reward in silver to the man who should be lucky enough to hit upon the first real manuscript. Barely an hour later a cheerful shout from one of the men working at the bottom of the small area so far excavated on the north-west side of the apartment announced the discovery of a 'Khat,' or writing.