

supplement my former observations, they did not bring to light novel features requiring detailed mention here. In regard to materials and mode of construction all the buildings resembled each other closely, showing plainly that they had been built and probably also deserted in approximately the same period. But their state of preservation greatly differed, according to the measure in which they had been exposed to the erosive action of the winds and the equally destructive diggings of "treasure-seekers." In some instances I came upon unmistakable evidence of their operations even in structures that had since been covered up again by deep sand.

Thus in a small temple-cella the well-moulded octagonal base of the principal image had been dug into from behind in search of supposed treasure. Yet the votive tablets that had been leaning against its foot in front were left untouched, and equally so a fairly thick packet of manuscript leaves comprising probably more than one 'Pothi.' But, alas! the damp rising from the floor when water still reached this neighbourhood had here done its work of destruction far more effectively than the "treasure-seekers" ever could. The leaves of paper had decayed completely into compact layers, which could not be detached from the hardened crust of what once was dust enveloping them. Ultimately these lumps of earth had to be cut off as a whole from the ground to which they adhered; but even with the utmost care in slicing, the flakes of paper since laid bare reveal only fragmentary groups of Brahmi characters. The upper board of wood which once covered one of these books, and which I was able to remove in a half-rotten condition, figures now as an instructive relic in my collection of ancient manuscripts and writing implements.

But opportunities for interesting antiquarian observations were by no means restricted to the finds which the excavation of extant ruins yielded. A careful survey of their surroundings also taught much that helps us to reconstruct the general aspects and conditions of the life which once flourished here. I have already referred to those strange witnesses of ancient orchards and avenues,