

timber débris of a much-decayed structure sticking out from the deep sand. The photograph on p. 429 shows this ruin after excavation, together with the interior of the quadrangle as seen from the north-east corner. Excessive erosion had played havoc with the structures which once occupied the exposed top of the rampart, and the lines of walls could there be traced with difficulty. Potsherds, small broken pieces of glass and metal, shreds of felt and scanty refuse of a similar kind, were all that marked their former occupation.

The trying conditions under which I had reached this site curiously reminded me of what Hiuen-Tsiang tells of the sand-buried town of Ho-lo-lo-kia, which a local legend heard by him at Pi-mo (see below, p. 438), placed somewhere in the great desert to the north of Khotan. It was believed to have been covered up by a rain of sand in consequence of the curse of a holy visitor whom its king had treated with ignominy, and who foretold the destruction of the town after seven days. Only one pious man took warning and escaped to Pi-mo by means of an underground passage. "On the seventh day, in the evening, it rained sand and earth, and filled the city." Ho-lo-lo-kia, the pilgrim tells us, "is now a great sand mound. The kings of the neighbouring countries and persons in power from distant spots have many times wished to excavate the mound and take away the precious things buried there; but as soon as they have arrived at the borders of the place a furious wind has sprung up, dark clouds have gathered together from the four quarters of heaven, and they have become lost and unable to find their way."

I had not gone to the Karadong site to look for treasures such as old Hiuen-Tsiang's "persons in power from distant spots" sought; nor had the Buran that greeted me on the day of my arrival made me lose the way. But the result was not very different if judged by the "finds" which rewarded the work here. I soon convinced myself that no other ruins of any kind could be traced in the neighbourhood besides those already briefly described. Even pottery fragments were scarce and limited to a small area.