

By April 18th those portions of the Stupa court which were not actually buried under sand dunes had been explored. The proper excavation of the other parts could not have been accomplished without months of labour and proportionately heavy expenditure. A careful examination of the surrounding area revealed no other structural remains; broken pottery found here and there on some narrow patches of ground between the swelling sand dunes was the only trace left of what probably were modest dwelling-places around the great shrine. The sand-storms, which visited us daily and the increasing heat and glare, had made the work very trying to the men as well as myself. It was manifestly time to withdraw from the desert. Before, however, leaving the ruins I took care to protect the sculptures which could not be moved, by having the trenches that had exposed them filled up again. It was a melancholy duty to perform, strangely reminding me of a true burial, and it almost cost me an effort to watch the images I had brought to light vanishing again, one after the other, under the pall of sand which had hidden them for so many centuries.

Jumbe-kum, some four miles beyond Rawak to the north-east, was the only remaining desert site around Khotan from which occasional finds had been reported to me. I took occasion to visit it from Rawak and convinced myself that this *débris-strewn* 'Tati' contained no remains capable of excavation. Thus, when on the 19th of April I started back to Khotan, I had the satisfaction of knowing that the programme of my explorations in the desert was completed.