

border, where Graeco-Buddhist art first endeavoured to use classical forms for the figures and scenes of Indian religious worship. Thence it takes the reader across the snowy range of the Hindukush up to the cradle of the River Oxus on the Pamirs, the 'Roof of the World,' and down into the great basin drained by the Tarim River which finally dies away in the marshes of Lop-nor. Explorations in the Kun-lun Range, framing this basin south and west of Khotan, show the forbidding nature of the glacier-clad mountains which feed the Tarim's greatest tributary. Then a succession of expeditions to ruined sites in the desert far beyond the extant oases east of Khotan helps the reader to realize the archaeological attractions as well as the serious difficulties of that dreaded Taklamakan Desert, where want of water raises constant obstacles and risks, and where work is possible only in the winter.

At the fascinating ruins of the Niya Site, amidst the remains of ancient dwellings abandoned since the third century A.D., and still surrounded by their dead arbours, hundreds of wooden documents were discovered, in Indian script and language, but often bearing classical seal impressions. Then north-eastwards to the wind-eroded dead wastes and the salt-encrusted dry lake-beds round Lop-nor. Plentiful discoveries rewarded my explorations carried on in this desolate region under exceptionally trying conditions; but I may allude here only to two. From ruins now situated at a distance of fully a hundred miles from the nearest supply of drinkable water, I recovered conclusive evidence that the use for administrative purposes of the same early Indian language I had found in the oldest records of the Khotan region, extended in the first centuries of our era as far as this most remote corner of Central Asia. At the same time, the discovery of fine wood-carvings in Graeco-Buddhist style, and of beautiful frescoes quite classical in style that once adorned Buddhist shrines offered