

west in a line of over twelve miles. I felt glad that the interesting remains excavated had supplied data such as I had scarcely hoped for when I first touched in 1901, between Ak-sipil and Hanguya, this vast tract of ancient occupation now abandoned to the desert. During the hours of broiling heat spent over my survey of the Siyelik remains and some small ruined Stupa mounds in the vicinity, the grand view of the snow-covered mountains to the south furnished a refreshing background. Rarely, indeed, can they be seen from the plains of Khotan, and I wondered as I stood watching the progress of the excavations at the large temple, whether the ice-crowned peaks of the Kun-lun had ever looked down upon labours such as mine.

But there was little time for thoughts of this sort or for enjoying the brilliant colour effects of a perfectly clear sunset over the desolate waste of yellow and red. All the hundreds of small stucco relievos required to be sorted, numbered, and packed. Though Naik Ram Singh and my Chinese secretary slaved away like myself, it was quite dark before I could return to camp. Chiang-ssü-yeh had from the start taken to excavation work with wonderful keenness and zest. In spite of the heat beating mercilessly down upon us and of the smothering dust rising from the trenches, he made a most watchful and energetic overseer. Then, with a versatility doing credit to the quick eye and hand of the true literatus, he promptly learned to copy with his brush the distinguishing letters to be painted on all 'finds.' Though he could not read a single one of my English characters and figures, the thoroughness of his Chinese scholar's training enabled him to copy them with such unfailing exactness that I never felt the slightest doubt about their perfect legibility when the 'finds' should come to be unpacked in the British Museum.

We spent the greater part of September 20th, too, at the Ak-terek site. Only in the afternoon, when all the sculpture fragments worth removing had been safely packed and the deep trenches along the temple walls carefully filled in again as a protection against 'treasure-seeking' exploration, could I follow my baggage through the rich agricultural tract of Hanguya to Lop town. There, at the