

reward. It consisted of three large leaves, fifteen inches long by five in height, belonging to a manuscript book or Pothi of some Buddhist Sanskrit text, in excellent preservation. More finds of the same kind, consisting of detached leaves or sometimes small packets, more or less intact, or mere torn fragments, in far greater number, followed in rapid succession. All these manuscript remains were in Indian Brahmi writing, but manifestly belonged to half a dozen or so of different texts, either in Sanskrit or that unknown language of ancient Khotan for which the examination of earlier discoveries seemed to indicate an Aryan origin. With them mingled rarer finds of oblong wooden tablets inscribed in the same non-Sanskritic language of old Khotan. By the evening the number of individual 'finds' exceeded a hundred, and I could scarcely keep pace with the diggers while extracting and marking them.

Fragments of stucco relievos, too, and of painted panels turned up in plenty, all closely recalling in style and decorative motives similar finds made in 1901 among the Buddhist shrines of Dandan-oilik (Fig. 76). Yet vainly did I watch all through the afternoon for the appearance of any structural remains *in situ*. The excavation had, indeed, been carried down through the layers of sand and plaster débris to the original floor of the building; but still I remained without guidance as to its shape or extent.

One thing only was clear, that the temple had been a large one, and that the diggings of Mullah Khwaja and his associates had barely done more than scrape the débris heaps left behind by destructive operations of a far earlier time. Fortunately the experience gained during former explorations saved me the doubts which might otherwise have arisen from this want of structural finds. From the first I felt certain as to the character of the ruin and the origin of the rich manuscript finds which it yielded. Lying close to the floor or in the loose sand from six inches to eighteen inches above it, they could only be votive deposits of those who had last worshipped here.

The vicinity of Domoko, some five to six miles off, enabled me to summon rapidly an additional contingent of