

temple, of which the central portion presented itself as a solid mass of masonry about forty-six feet long and thirty feet wide. Above the débris encumbering the sides there still showed remains of fine stucco relievos arranged between architectural decoration, also of good design. On clearing a small portion of the base of the east side with the few men at hand, I lighted upon fragments of stucco sculptures of large size, including a well-modelled colossal Buddha head, closely resembling in style the relievos of the Rawak Stupa, and therefore Graeco-Buddhist work.

Then I felt quite assured that the temple dated from a period far more ancient than that ascertained for the Tibetan fort. A number of observations made it appear *a priori* probable that a site of considerable antiquity had been reoccupied here, as in the case of Endere. The careful excavation of this temple and of the other ruins of earlier origin noted on my arrival would have claimed much labour and time; and as I could not afford this before my start northward, I determined in any case to revisit the site. The vicinity of Abdal, where I proposed to establish my base, and which would have to serve as the starting-point for the desert journey to Tun-huang, would make it easy to shape my plans accordingly.

So, after a further rapid reconnaissance of the whole site, I retraced my steps to the fort. There I had the quarters which we had excavated, and which continued that day, too, to yield up interesting 'finds' in plenty, carefully filled in again. It was a precaution in case any casual traveller visiting the lonely ruin before my return should be ill-advised enough to hunt for 'treasure' in such refuse left behind by poor soldiers. The tramp back to camp was cheerful for me in spite of the cold and the dark, which had settled upon us before 'the burial' in the fort was completed. For did I not carry away unexpectedly rich spoil from a ruin which had looked so unpromising, and the hopes of more to follow?

There was little chance, however, of my being allowed to forget the difficulties which had to be overcome somehow before I might return to this quarry. On arrival in camp I found that Rai Ram Singh had rejoined me in