

yellow, etc., evidently once belonging to streamers, and fragments of wood-carving in Gandhara style, which had perhaps once adorned the 'Tee' or decorative umbrella above the Stupa, I recovered curious relics of what may have been votive offerings of the last worshippers at the shrine. They consisted of a mass of artificial flowers, cleverly cut out of stiff woollen fabrics, coloured cream, blue, saffron, purple, etc., and provided with small stems of wood supporting a clever imitation of stamina. Two large pieces of a stout material resembling buckram, and showing a diagram of black and white painted on a surface layer of wax or plaster, turned up with some of the flowers still stuck on to them; of others there remained the punched holes. Evidently these painted fabrics had served to hang up offerings of artificial flowers.

I felt warmed inwardly with elation as I sat in my bitterly cold tent till a late hour that evening, trying to record in orderly fashion the facts and impressions of the day's work, and to find the true perspective and import of the vista which this unpretentious ruin had begun to reveal of classical pictorial art strangely transplanted to Lop-nor. It meant an illuminating discovery, but also the source of new problems. I should have to face practical difficulties, too, and these almost at once. For the fine wall-paintings now about to rise from their grave there was no other chance of thorough study and protection but removal. But I knew well, it would be a very difficult task to effect this and the distant transport in safety. The backing of the fresco panels was nothing but a layer of friable plaster, *i.e.* dried mud, which in many places showed ominous cracks even where still adhering to the wall. The method and means of detaching them, as well as of packing them, had still to be improvised, not to mention the making of cases sufficiently large and strong out of such materials as the jungle of the Miran stream could supply.