

Among the frescoes covering the walls inside was the fine panel reproduced in Plate XI. B, the subject of which M. Foucher has identified with Hariti, the Indian goddess of smallpox. In full accord with the euphemistic conception exemplified by a well-known Graeco-Buddhist statue from Gandhara, the dread goddess, the destroyer of children, is represented as a kindly, richly dressed matron with young boys playing around her arms and shoulders. Her worship was probably quite as popular in the Tarim Basin as in ancient India, and shows features which have earned for her from M. Foucher the designation of a 'Buddhist Madonna.' The resemblance is close enough in the case of a picture of Hariti, excavated by the German expedition of Dr. von Lecoq at Turfan, to have at first caused some thought of a Christian Madonna being intended.

The fact of this cella having been originally built on the top of a tamarisk cone supplies us with two indications of geographical interest. It gives an exact gauge for the rate of growth here of these curious sand formations. It also proves that the ground upon which the village site of Farhad-Beg was established within or before the eighth century A.D., then already showed physical features closely akin to those now observed here and at other points near the border line between the cultivated area and the scrub-covered edge of the Taklamakan.

As if to illustrate the change which might be brought about along this line by human activity, without any very marked change in the climatic conditions, I found that irrigation was now being rapidly extended from the new colony of Malak-alagan, first visited by me in 1901, towards the deserted village of 'Old Domoko.' At Khadalik the site of the ruins I had excavated had since 1906 been actually brought under cultivation for spring crops, and villagers were already prospecting about Farhad-Beg for suitably level spots to which surplus water could be conducted off from the lower reach of the Domoko Yar. My work at both places had thus been accomplished just in time.

I had occasion subsequently, at the two oases of