

are almost all Indian, and some of them point to a connexion with the Indo-Scythian dominion. But by the side of official designations familiar from ancient Indian usage there appear titles which are distinctly non-Indian and still await explanation.

We often meet with the name of Khotan, in a form almost identical with that now in use, but also in the form *Kustana* 'breast of the earth'. This, probably a product of 'learned popular etymology', is recorded also by Hsüan-tsang. But, as might be expected in correspondence, we find other localities also, like the Niya oasis and Charchan, mentioned by their ancient names. Among the local names occurring in these documents I was later on able to identify *Chadota* as that of the ancient site itself. It figures under the Chinese transcription of *Ching-chüeh* as the designation of a small territory mentioned in the Han Annals to the east of Khotan and approximately in the right position.

Among the many curious facts revealed already by Professor Rapson's first decipherment I may mention in passing that there existed a recognized official terminology for the various classes of wooden stationery. Thus, *e.g.*, the wedge-shaped tablets are always designated in their context as *kilamudra*, literally 'sealed wedges'. But far more important is it that the painstaking research of the same distinguished scholar has recently succeeded in determining the chronological order of the successive rulers whose years of reign are indicated in the dated documents, and in proving that their seat was not Khotan, but the territory of Shan-shan corresponding to the present Lop tract.

It seemed strange that these ruins far away in the north, overrun by what Hindu legends vaguely knew as the great