

It was founded in honour of an Arhat who had by various miracles won the special worship of one of the first Buddhist kings of the country. Under its Stupa, which was a hundred feet high, a great collection of sacred relics from Buddha's body had been deposited. Fa-hien also, two and a half centuries earlier, had seen this monastery, and describes "the magnificent and very beautiful hall of Buddha" that rose behind its Stupa. Judging from what previous experience has taught me of the fate which has overtaken all ancient structures within the cultivated area of the oasis, I did not expect to find remains of what was undoubtedly only a pile of sun-dried bricks doomed to rapid decay. All the more delighted was I when among the villages westwards I heard the name of Somiya mentioned. Other phonetic analogies prove that this represents the direct derivative of the ancient local name which is intended by the Chinese transcription of 'Sa-mo-joh,' and to the evidence of the name there was soon added topographical confirmation.

Leaving the excavated area of the ancient city at its north-west corner, I reached first the hamlet of Eskente half a mile to the west. There I was told of a 'Döbe' or mound that exists near the cemetery of Somiya. The latter place I found to be situated only three-fourths of a mile further west, and to consist of some thirty scattered dwellings. I went at once to the local Mazar, which is surrounded by an extensive cemetery, and on asking for the 'Döbe' was taken to a field adjoining its north-eastern corner. A little low mound, rising scarcely five feet above the surrounding ground, is respected by the villagers with a kind of superstitious fear, though it shares in no orthodox way the sacred character of the neighbouring Mazar and cemetery. I soon had the oldest men of the village summoned to the spot, and in what they told me of the mound we may, I think, yet trace the last lingering recollection of the ancient shrine that has left its name to Somiya. Shami Sope, a withered old man of about ninety, had heard from his father and grandfather, who had both died at a great age, that the little mound had ever been respected by the folk of Somiya as a