

Carefully extracted with my own hand and cleared of the adhering sand, it proved a perfectly preserved oblong leaf of paper, 13 inches long and 4 inches high, that had undoubtedly formed part of a larger manuscript arranged in the shape of an Indian 'Pothi.' The circular hole intended for the string that was passed through the separate leaves in order to keep them together and preserve their order is placed on the left side of the leaf, as in most of the ancient manuscripts that have previously been acquired from Chinese Turkestan. The six lines of beautifully clear writing which cover each side of the leaf show Brahmi characters of the so-called Gupta type, but a non-Indian language. The photograph reproduced on p. 298 shows one side of this leaf.

While the men gathered around to watch me cleaning the precious find I heard more than one humorous remark about the chance which had placed this first 'Khat,' as well as the cash reward for it, in the hands of the youth who alone of the party could read and write, and whom, as already related, I had brought along from Tawakkel just on account of these acquirements. Niaz, our 'Mullah,' to give him his proud title (he is seen kneeling on the extreme left in the group reproduced in my photograph, p. 274), was himself beaming with boyish delight at his good luck, and subsequently did his best to prove worthy of it by additional care in digging and in penning my Turki "despatches."

The interesting find just described was made at a depth of about 5 feet from the surface and close to the rough wooden post seen upright on the left side of the apartment as photographed after excavation p. 295. It was quickly followed by a series of other manuscript finds, either in loose leaves, more or less complete, or in little sets of fragments. They all showed Brahmi writing of an early type and had, as their conformity in paper, size and handwriting showed, originally belonged to at least three distinct 'Pothis,' or books. Their contents were soon recognised by me as Sanskrit texts treating of Buddhist canonical matter. The position in which all these manuscript pieces were found, embedded in loose sand several feet above the original flooring, proved beyond all