

these to diggings carried on by a certain Mullah Khwaja at a ruined site in the vicinity of the Domoko oasis. Through Badruddin I had myself secured some interesting leaves of Sanskrit 'Pothis' which Mullah Khwaja had found, and by sending out an old associate of Turdi I had managed on my return from the mountains to bring the man himself to Khotan together with some further specimens.

Mullah Khwaja proved to be no regular 'treasure-seeker,' but a respectable village official well advanced in years whom Ahmad Merghen, my old guide to Dandan-oilik, had some five years previously taught to look out for 'old Khats' such as he had seen me excavate. Mullah Khwaja, being badly in arrears with revenue dues to the Ya-mên, had thought of a chance here for getting out of his debts. By using his local influence he had induced men accustomed to collecting fuel in the desert jungle to the north and east of Domoko to guide him to some 'Kone-shahrs' not far off. Scraping among the ruins at one of these small sites, known to the woodmen as Khadalik, he had come upon the hoped-for 'Khats.' Having realized some money by their sale at Khotan, he had intermittently carried on his burrowings for the last three years or so. Of the true 'treasure-seeker's' love for a roving life there seemed little or nothing in the age-bowed little man, nothing also of that fraternity's cunning shiftiness and exuberant imagination. So when, on the promise of a good reward and my intercession at the Keriya Ya-mên, Mullah Khwaja undertook to show me his find-spot, I felt free from worrying doubts as to whether I might not be starting on a wild-goose-chase.

Domoko, which I had passed through in 1901 on my search for Hsüan-tsang's P'i-mo, lies a day's march east of Chira. The site I was bound for was said to be situated only about one and a half 'Pao-t'ais' or roughly three miles from Malak-alagan, the northernmost colony of that village tract. In order to reach the latter I chose a route away from the high road, which enabled me to enfilade as it were the belt of scrub-covered ground where the outlying hamlets of Chira, Gulakhma, and Ponak carry