

the remedy indicated by local tradition, which tells, as I have mentioned above, of repeated shifts of cultivation backwards and forwards.

When I had inspected the dyke my guides took me south along the left bank of the reed-covered depression in which the Domoko stream meanders, and after little over one mile we reached the popular shrine of Mazar-toghrak, marked by a fine grove of old Toghraks of great size. A little to the west of it and less than half a mile from the stream was the spot of 'old Khats,' which Mullah Khwaja had cast his eyes upon but never touched.

When on the morning of October 4th I began to clear the little plateau, about 200 feet by 130 feet, rising above what was manifestly eroded ground, I soon realized that I was opening an ancient rubbish mound with all the unsavoury associations I remembered so well from the diggings of my first journey. From the layers covered only with a foot or two of drift sand there came the same pungent smells of long-decayed animal refuse, old rags of coarse fabrics and felt, broken implements of wood, especially such as weavers use to this day, etc. But instead of the promised great haul of 'Khats,' I had to be satisfied at first with little scraps of documents on paper, in Chinese and cursive Brahmi script, presumably in the old language of Khotan. Their material and writing gave evidence of approximately the same date as the Khadalik ruins. Of the small structures which must have once stood amidst these refuse accumulations, only the floors, with here and there a mud-built sitting-platform, could be traced.

The day's reward came late in the evening when near the west edge of the plateau one of the diggers hit upon a confused heap of narrow wooden tablets, or rather sticks, bearing on their flattened surface Chinese records in single line. Owing evidently to prolonged exposure to atmospheric influences many had become more or less rotten, and all were thickly encrusted with decayed matter and salts drawn from the layers of refuse. Their wood had become so exceedingly friable that many got broken during removal in spite of all the care used. But with