

described as 'old seats of the Tu-huo-lo' or Tukhara, famous in Central-Asian history. This country, he tells us, had long been deserted, and "all the towns presented the appearance of an uninhabited waste."

It had before seemed a problem how to reconcile the results of my excavations of 1901 with the pilgrim's reference to ruins seen in the same locality but abandoned to the desert centuries earlier. But as soon as I had verified Sadak's find by the discovery of more Kharoshthi tablets in the same ruined structure, and under my own eyes, the right explanation dawned upon me. Clearly we had here a definite historical instance of an old site in the desert having been reoccupied after the lapse of centuries. The Kharoshthi records on wood, like those of the Niya site which they closely approach palaeographically, undoubtedly belong to the second or third century A.D., and thus to the very period of the ascendancy in the Tarim Basin of those Indo-Scythians whom Hsüan-tsang, from the main seat of their power on the Oxus, knew as Tukhara. The small house yielding the tablets must have belonged to the earlier settlement which Hsüan-tsang found completely deserted and in ruins.

That the area had subsequently come under occupation again, probably in consequence of the improved conditions which followed the establishment of Chinese authority throughout Eastern Turkestan within a little over ten years after Hsüan-tsang's passage, was conclusively proved by the ruined fort which my former excavations had shown to have served for a Chinese garrison at the commencement of the eighth century A.D. But even the condition of the earlier structure itself furnished evidence for this re-occupation; for only thus did it seem possible to account for the layers of straw, plentifully mixed with wheat grains, and of stable refuse which uniformly extended both over the broken walls and the mud-brick *débris* filling the rooms between. Evidently some one among the new settlers of the seventh or eighth century had found it convenient to erect his humble homestead over the mound formed by the tumbled-down ruin.

A curious find from the latter, which at first did not