

came upon the well-preserved portion of a Kharoshthi document still folded sticking out from a layer of rubbish. The writing and arrangement of the fragment agreed precisely with similar documents on leather recovered by me on my former journey from the richest refuse heap of the Niya site.

When searching the bank of ancient refuse which had yielded it, I ascertained that it extended right down to the natural soil of hard loess, six feet lower, being embedded on either side between stamped clay layers of the later rampart. From among the miscellaneous contents of the small rubbish heap thus preserved there emerged bagfuls of rags in a variety of fabrics, including fine silks, fragments of rugs, and a knife-hilt in bone. Seeing what the builders of the Chinese fort in the 7th century had taken here for a foundation, I wondered how much more of the débris of the earlier site might still rest safely covered up under other portions of the rampart.

Whatever the defensive value of the latter may have been against human attacks, it had served to catch and retain heavy accumulations of drift sand which protected the structures within. So the complete excavation of those dwelling quarters in the fort, which I had not been able to touch before, proved a heavy task for my labourers. We now cleared them all, including a large hall; but our only finds were some fine wooden pillars with rich mouldings—clearly produced by the turning-lathe in spite of diameters exceeding one foot—and some elaborately modelled fireplaces in underground rooms which must have served for shelter in the winter. While my diggers were thus hard at work under the Naik's and Chiang-ssü-yeh's supervision, I found time to visit certain remains farther away about which information had reached me. Going north beyond the large Stupa, I ascertained that the shapeless mounds of stamped clay, already noticed on my first arrival, had originally formed part of a large walled enclosure decayed by erosion almost beyond recognition and half buried amidst dunes.

It was only by closely observing the alignment of the wall fragments still traceable here and there that the area