

hundred pieces of paper, including many small fragments, from the rubbish layers which filled the easternmost and narrowest of these adjoining apartments. In the refuse which had been thrown out of this and left to litter the slope immediately south, a thorough search still revealed quite a mass of fragments of inscribed paper and wood. In the thin curled pieces of wood which formed the majority, it was easy to recognize 'shavings' from Chinese slips originally of the regular size, about nine and a half inches long and half an inch wide, which had been scraped down in order to serve again for writing. Since the material used for these slips seems to have been mostly a very pliable and smooth pine wood which could not possibly have been obtained locally, the economy practised by the fresh use of this old stationery was easy to account for.

Leaving a few men under Ibrahim Beg's supervision to sift carefully this refuse, I next turned my attention to the remains of a large but badly eroded structure in timber and wattle which had originally formed a kind of western wing to the building marked by the brick walls just mentioned. Huge Toghrak beams lay scattered over the eroded east slope, and some of the posts which appeared to have once supported a sort of central hall still stood upright to a height of over thirteen feet. The information available about the contents of the documents brought away by Hedin made it highly probable that this block of rooms had once contained an official Chinese residence. The careful clearing effected here yielded no finds beyond some large volutes carved in Toghrak wood, which probably served for the adornment of a bracket supporting the roof.

But when I turned the men to a piece of ground closely adjoining westwards which seemed to have been occupied by an outhouse or open court, Chinese records, mostly on wood but some also on paper, were recovered in quick succession (Fig. 119). Among the thirty odd wooden slips a number were quite perfect; others were only charred at one end, having evidently been used as convenient tapers. Alas! there was no Sinologist by my side, not even lively Chiang-ssŭ-yeh, to enlighten me as to the contents. Yet it was easy to guess the purport in the case of a slip still