

that here, too, the dating was by the year of the reigning Maharaja; but his name, apparently Dugaka, entirely differed in formation from the names of rulers recorded by the Niya site documents. It was evident that here, too, Chinese control, military and political, had allowed the indigenous administration to continue undisturbed in the hands of the local ruling family.

That the house we were excavating had once sheltered some representative of this native ruler of the Lou-lan region became highly probable when we discovered that the rubbish on the top of a small débris heap, quite close to the north end of the main structure, and perhaps marking an outhouse, held not less than twelve Kharoshthi tablets. Rectangular and wedge-shaped letters, memoranda, and account records on oblong tablets were all represented among them. The wood of some of these records had become badly bleached and cracked by exposure. But enough of the writing remained to prove that the whole collection had once belonged to the 'Daftar' of some petty native official. Along with the finds of Kharoshthi documents at other ruins of the site, and the observations I was able to make as to their places and conditions of discovery, this justified the important conclusion, that the same early Indian language as found in the records of the Niya site was in use also in the Lop-nor regions for indigenous administration and business. Considering how far removed Lop-nor is from Khotan, this uniform extension of an Indian script and language to the extreme east of the Tarim Basin offers a special historical interest.

But like many new discoveries which seem simple and obvious, it also raised fresh problems. In the Khotan region it was possible to account partially, at least, for this official use of an Indian language by the old local tradition recorded by Hsüan-tsang, which mentions early immigration from India as an important element in the local population. But so far away to the east, at the very threshold of China, the identical use of this foreign administrative language seemed to indicate rather a political dominion exercised by invaders from the Indian side and for a time embracing the whole of the Tarim