

Chiang Szü-yeh was able to verify by actual inspection that the reading of the *nien-hao* as *K'ai-yüan* was correct, and that the record left on the wall here dated from the year corresponding to A.D. 719.²

Sadak's
ruins.

Then I hurried to the spot where, only a quarter of a mile to the south, Sadak declared that he had found the Kharoṣṭhī tablet, which he had brought to me at Imām Ja'far Sādiq, now marked E. vi. 009 in the List. The ground there was covered with low hillocks of sand bearing tamarisk dead or living, eroded banks of clay showing up between them. The spot to which Sadak took me without any hesitation looked just like one of these terraces, only less steep. But when I had reached it, I quickly recognized that what rose a few feet above the easy sand slope was not a mere 'witness', but a solid mass of refuse with the broken brick walls of a small house emerging through it. The unpretending ruin had probably been laid bare by a slight movement in the adjoining dunes since my first visit to the site, and Sadak knew that two men from Niya seeking for 'treasure' and antiques had first noticed it a year or two before his own prospecting. They had contented themselves with digging holes here and there, and had left the refuse thus extracted lying close by. I had scarcely begun to have this searched when, amidst plentiful fragments of pottery, rags of felt and coarse fabrics, and clods of stable refuse, there emerged a small wooden disc, E. vi. ii. 2, evidently cut out from a tablet and bearing parts of five lines in Kharoṣṭhī. Sadak's statement had found speedy and conclusive confirmation, and his reward came with equal promptness.

Excavation
of ruin
E. vi.

Setting the men at once to work we had most of the ruin, marked E. vi, cleared by nightfall. A thick layer of stable refuse and straw covered the top, extending uniformly over the remains of walls built of sun-dried bricks and only three feet high, and over the débris which filled the two rooms clearly traceable between them (see plan, Plate 21). The débris consisted chiefly of decomposed brickwork. Evidently here an earlier structure had been levelled down to within three feet of the original ground-level, and its place subsequently occupied by a shed where horses and cattle were stabled. From the floor of the two rooms shown in the plan and that of two adjoining apartments (iii, iv), which erosion had almost completely destroyed, there were recovered, besides small miscellaneous objects and three fragmentary tablets nearly effaced, a Kharoṣṭhī document, E. vi. ii. 1 (Plate XXXVIII), which is perfectly preserved and presents points of distinct interest. It is an oblong tablet, measuring about eight by four inches and showing nine lines of clear Kharoṣṭhī writing of a peculiar type, unusually stiff and with flourishes which recall the cursive Brāhmī *ductus* of a much later period. A number of curious characters, perhaps intended for name-marks or signatures, appear in the line before last. Another curious find was a strip of flexible bark, E. vi. iii. 1, inscribed on the inside with a line of very cursive characters which may possibly be Brāhmī, but have not yet been deciphered. Here was discovered also a canvas bag, E. vi. 0010 (Plate XXVIII), with two fire-blocks in it, of the type already described above and showing fire-holes still blackened by smoke.³

Ruins at
Endere
mentioned
by Hsüan-
tsang.

But of far greater interest than any individual relics was the new light which the discovery of this small ruin began to throw on the history of the whole Endere Site. When, in 1901, I excavated the ruined shrine E. 1 within the circular fort, I recovered from it the Chinese sgraffito dated in A.D. 719, as well as a considerable number of manuscript remains in Brāhmī, Tibetan, and Chinese. From the evidence thus supplied I then concluded that the fort must have been occupied by a Chinese post about the first decades of the eighth century A.D., and that it was probably abandoned during the Tibetan occupation which followed in the course of that century.⁴

² Cf. for this inscription and its significance, *Ancient Khotan*, i. p. 428.

³ Cf. above, p. 233, and Mr. Joyce's note, *Man*, xi. 3. 24,

with Figs. 2-4.

⁴ Cf. *Ancient Khotan*, i. pp. 428 sq.