

No. 475.

Miscellaneous Series.

CHINA.

DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR REPORTS.

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JOURNEY FROM YACHON TO  
TACHIENLU.



FOREIGN OFFICE,  
*September, 1898.*





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NOTES OF A

JOURNEY TO TACHIENLU.

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*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty,  
SEPTEMBER, 1898.*

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Route map attached at end.

*Notes of a Journey to Tachienlu in February, 1898,*

By MR. CONSULAR-ASSISTANT G. J. LITTON.

(Received at Foreign Office, July 25, 1898.)

1.—*The Lesser Route from Yachon to Tachienlu.*

Yachon which I take as the starting point of my trip is a **Yachon**. clean well-built city, with broad streets and many large private houses. The population is about 25,000 Chinese, and it would seem as many crows, for these birds literally swarm in the yamen and temple gardens. The Chinese Government has recognised the very considerable political and commercial importance of Yachon by making it the residence of the Chien Chang Taotai whose jurisdiction extends south to the borders of Yünnan and west to the borders of Thibet. Yachon, situated as it is at the edge of the western mountain system, is in fact the key of the central plains of Ssüchuan. An enemy from the west who had got possession of Yachon would have a clear run down the valley of the Ya River to Chiating, which is in the Min Valley and in the heart of the province.

Five routes branch from Yachon through five gaps in the hills by which the city is surrounded. The main commercial route is south-east down the Ya, which runs through a beautifully cultivated valley to Chiating where it joins the Tung and thus reinforced flows into the Min. Chiating is 700 feet below Yachon and 85 miles distant. Then there is the great official route from the provincial capital which enters the city from the north-east and leaves it by the south gate for Thibet and the Chien Chang. A track which is but little used runs south through tea hills to the wild country at the back of O Mei Shan; finally, the lesser route to Tachienlu follows along the course of the Upper Ya; this road, as being little known to foreigners, I determined to follow.

Leaving Yachon by the little north gate I followed up the <sup>Upper Ya</sup> banks of the Ya for four miles and crossed by a ferry, and then <sup>River.</sup> proceeded through a fine gorge. The river above Yachon is little more than a mountain stream, unnavigable even for "p'a tsu" or rafts; but a large quantity of timber, one of the principal exports of Yachon, is floated down from Lu Shan and Tien Tsuen. In some places the stream is quite blocked with logs, and coolies

are employed all along the river to help the timber in its downward course with bamboo poles. Seven miles from Yachon the path from Lu Shan and Ming Shan joins the main route, and from this point the tea carriers with their huge loads, often weighing 200 catties, first appear.

The little route is coming into favour for the Ming Shan and Tien Tsuen teas, and several large new warehouses have been built at Tien Tsuen for storage. About one-quarter of the total amount of tea arriving at Tachienlu is now brought by the little route.

Above the gorge the river divides; the main stream comes from Tien Tsuen making a large bend to the south-west; a minor stream flows down from Mu Ping and Ming Shan hills. Crossing the tributary the path avoids the bend of the river, and passing over a steep ridge (3,100 feet) descends into a broad and thickly cultivated valley dotted with numerous hamlets. In the centre of the valley is the market of Shi Yang, 19 miles from Yachon, where the appearance of a foreigner caused great excitement, and I had much difficulty in getting lodgings.

The population of this and of the other mountain valleys in the Yachon district are recent immigrants from the Hukuang provinces; many of them are certainly of Hakka extraction and preserve some relics of that dialect. The women are all large-footed and do all the work in the shops and inns, the lords of creation being chiefly occupied with opium smoking. The ignorance of the outside world is profound. One of the elders of the village remarked to me that there were three kingdoms under heaven, China, Thibet, and Canton (to which latter I was attributed). He was corrected by a man in the crowd who said there must also be "yang kuo" or ocean kingdoms, because a relative of his who had been to Peking had told him that the "yang wang" or foreign kings were permitted to live in houses outside the gates of the Imperial palace, an obvious reference to the foreign legations.

Leaving this enlightened valley by a gap in the hills to the north-west we passed through some broken but well-irrigated country, covered with paddy fields, and descended to the river again at the little district city of Tien Tsuen (28 miles), which consists of little more than one wide street. Outside the west gate are some fine tea warehouses.

From Tien Tsuen (2,700 feet) we travelled for 35 miles through a succession of gorges, keeping to the banks of the Ya, now reduced to a mere mountain brook; the country became wilder as we advanced; after Tien Tsuen no provisions whatever were to be purchased, the only signs of cultivation were a few tea clearings and some patches of maize, which is the only food of the very scanty population.

On the afternoon of the second day we left the river and attacked a pass through the hills to the left. The top (6,500 feet) was covered with virgin forest and patches of snow. Descending to the hamlets of Shui Ch'a P'ing (otter terrace) and Ch'a Ti (tea

embankment) we prepared for the ascent of the Ma Ngai, or Horse **Ma Ngai** Cliff Pass, the only serious obstacle between Tien Tsuen and **Pass.** Tachienlu; after 6,000 feet everything was covered with wet snow, which made travelling exceedingly difficult. First we ascended a steep gorge, from the head of which a tributary of the Ya takes its source. At a wretched hut, 7,500 feet, we left the tea porters as it was 1 p.m., and with their heavy loads it was impossible to attempt the ascent that day. We struggled on up a steep shoulder which descended from some high peaks to the south; at about 8,500 feet we were enveloped in mist, but as the snow at this height was hard progress was easier than on the lower slopes. It was impossible to make out the ranges, but now and again some fine pine trees festooned with icicles loomed through the fog. The summit of the pass (9,700 feet by B. P. thermometer) was swept by a wind so furious that we were almost blown over the cliff, which on the west or Tachienlu side is so extremely steep that snow does not lie. The air was full of particles of ice, and clothes and hair were speedily frozen. Hurrying down the steep corkscrew path we soon emerged from the clouds and found ourselves at the head of a long narrow gorge which descends to the Tung River; to the right and left rose pine-clad mountains, and as the mists dispersed the glittering snow peaks above Tachienlu were seen towering above the west end of the valley beyond the Tung River. We found shelter for the night in a little hamlet of stone huts 2,000 feet below the Ma Ngai, and the next day descended through pine woods and evergreen shrubs to the Tung River at a point about eight miles above Lu Ting Chiao Bridge. Unfortunately there is no means of crossing the river at this point as it has never occurred to the Chinese that tea could possibly pass by any other route than "Kuo Chi'ao," *i.e.* over the Lu Ting Bridge, where besides certain dues are collected. Thus we had to descend to Lu-ting Chiao by a rough path some 1,000 feet above the river before we could get on to the main road from Yachon to Tachienlu. From this point the route is too well known to call for description. We accomplished the two stages from Lu Ting Bridge in one and a-half days in glorious weather, not a cloud having been seen in this favoured region for three months. The road is a continuous ascent, extremely rough and stony; very little cultivation is seen, and the population of the few hamlets passed depends entirely on the passing traffic for its livelihood. The mountains which enclose the Tung River become loftier and more barren as we advance, and the town of Tachienlu is so dwarfed by the giants which surround it that it is difficult to realise the importance of the place.

The "little route" which I have described is unquestionably the natural way from Yachon to Tachienlu, as a glance at the chart will show; it is more direct and 30 miles shorter than the main route; if a ferry was established 10 miles above Lu Ting it could further be shortened by 20 miles. Besides, while on the main route two formidable passes, the Fei Yueh Ling 9,000 feet and the Ta Hsiang Ling 9,300 feet, have to be surmounted, the

**Remark on  
the lesser  
route.**

little route presents only one obstacle, the Ma Ngai. The badness of the road is much exaggerated by the Chinese, though during the summer rains it is probably difficult at some points. The reason of the existence of so circuitous a route as the main road is probably the fact that the old Chien Chang-Yünnan route which now divides from the Tachienlu road after passing the Ta Hsiang Ling was followed centuries ago, when the country round Tien Tsuen, through which the lesser route passes, was still in the hands of Man-tzu tribes, who are still found at Mu Ping a few miles to the north of Tien Tsuen. Thus the connection with Tachienlu was formed as a kind of branch from the Chien Chang route. But as remarked above the lesser route is now coming into favour with the tea carriers.

## 2.—*Present Conditions of Trade at Tachienlu.*

**Tachienlu.**

The little town of Tachienlu, with its narrow streets and small low wooden houses, contains about 9,000 inhabitants, of whom the majority are Thibetans. The strategical and commercial importance of the town as being the gate of the elevated plateaux of Thibet is well known. The true reason why the pushing Chinese peasant has never got west of Tachienlu is probably that the country is not suitable for any form of agriculture, even for the cultivation of maize. The Chinaman is out of his element in a purely pastoral country, and has not therefore ousted the Thibetan. Two days' journey to the north or west of Tachienlu brings the traveller to the magnificent upland pastures, where the best wool is produced. The Luting Chiao road is the route for all Thibetan exports from Tachienlu; from the north gate an important road follows the valley of one of the two streams, in the fork of which the town is situated. Three stages from Tachienlu the north road divides; one route bears north-west into East Thibet, Chantui and Dergé; the greater part of the wool comes down this way, and the route is said to present no great difficulties; the other division of the north road continues due north to Hsin Kai Tsu, or in Chinese official language Mung Kung T'ing, on the upper waters of the T'ung River, which is there known as the Ta Chin River, and forms the boundary between the plateaux of Eastern Thibet and the mountains inhabited by the Man-tzu tribes. There are Chinese traders settled on the Ta Chin River, and there is a large commerce in rhubarb and musk, which, however, finds its way out to Kuan Hsien, on the Chengtu plain. Tachienlu has no west gate; the great official road to Batang and Lhasa leaves the town by the south gate; the main road to Chantui and Dergé, slips off to the north soon after crossing the Che Toh pass (14,500 feet) one day out from Tachienlu. Finally, the south road described below leaves the Batang route five miles outside Tachienlu.

**Trade.**

With reference to the trade, it appears that by far the greater part of the exports come from Litang (10 days) and the States of



Chantui and Dergé, from 12 to 20 stages to the north-west. Merchants have few dealings with Batang, and practically none with Lhasa direct. The bulk of the Tachienlu trade is certainly greater than the bulk of the Sungpan trade, with which one would naturally compare it, but it appears not to be on the increase like the Sungpan commerce; indeed, of late years a serious decrease is complained of by the merchants. There are very few Mohammedans in Tachienlu, and those are but poor, so the trade lacks the stimulus which it receives at Sungpan from wealthy Mohammedans who send their assistants on long expeditions into Thibet. Tachienlu trade is in the hands of the Yachon tea merchants and some agents of Chungking and Chengtu firms, none of whom would venture to put their noses inside Thibet. In Thibet, especially in Chantui and Dergé, there appear however to be a good many "Lao Shan," *i.e.*, Shensi traders, who do business on their own account in a small way, especially in collecting musk.

Of exports musk is the most valuable, every hong that I Exports. entered reeked of it, and nearly all the Thibetans who come from the far interior bring some with them. Adulteration is practised by the Thibetans as well as by the Chinese. Price of medium musk is 13 times its weight in silver.

Wool comes next, this has seriously diminished in quantity and increased in price during the last few years, which is attributed firstly to the disturbances in Chantui and Dergé where the best wool is produced, and partly to increased demand in Thibet for the purposes of weaving. The coarse sack-like "mu-tsz" cloth is worn more or less by all the Chinese coolies on the frontier, while the fine red "p'ulu" of Dergé is the clothing of the better class Thibetans. The poorer Thibetans, such as yak and pony drivers, dress entirely in undressed sheepskins, the wool being worn next to the skin. About 40,000 piculs of wool finds its way down to Tachienlu in the year, and a merchant informed me that about half that quantity of woollens is made up in Dergé. The wool export is severely hampered by the rise in the price of cash which is now at 980 to the tael in Tachienlu. This makes portorage to Yachon a heavy and it is to be feared in the future a prohibitive item.

The medicine trade which passes through Tachienlu is trifling in comparison to that of Sungpan. Only inferior qualities of rhubarb are produced. To the north, however, and to the south near Mo Hsi Mien the best rhubarb in China grows; the bulk of it is sent out, to the north by Kuan Hsien and the Chengtu plain and to the south by Fulin and the Chien Chang route to Yachon.

Goatskins are a considerable item of trade, a highly esteemed fox fur known as "sha hu" finds a ready market. It is a very small fox, the skin being particularly glossy and of a fine mixed red and grey colour. A skin sells for 80 tael c., and it requires about 30 skins to make a jacket.

Gold known in Tachienlu as "huang huo," or yellow goods, has long been an article of export, and all the large honges deal in

it. The gold comes down chiefly in the form of dust, though I saw one large nugget and several small ones. Litang produces the best and Chantui the most gold. Formerly 7,000 to 8,000 ozs. used to be sent to China annually in the ordinary way of trade, but this has decreased to about half, principally on account of the wars, but a large quantity was taken out by the Chinese soldiers in the way of loot, and probably a considerable amount is brought out in small parcels which do not pass through the hands of the "huang huo" merchants. There is now little or no profit to be made on gold, at Tachienlu prices being from 30-32, almost the same as at Chungking (32-34), but in the interior of Thibet I was informed that gold is still to be had at several points below the market price. The Thibetans have the strongest objection to mining of any kind, except washing the alluvial sand in river beds (t'aosha). This is no doubt partly due to the fear of an influx of Chinese miners, but chiefly to geomantic superstitions. The idea is that gold in the reef represents a vital principle, and that it produces gold dust by some mysterious process of generation; if the reefs are removed, it is believed that not only would the alluvial gold disappear, but the prosperity of the whole country would wither away. The Chinese hold similar views, for I read in a Censor's Memorial the statement that as certain mines had not been worked since the time of Yung Cheng (1723-1736) the quantity of gold must have increased largely. It is noticeable that the prospecting proclivities of the late Viceroy Lu were in a measure the cause of the troubles in Chantui.

Tachienlu trade is, of course, hampered by likin. Exports pay taxes at Tachienlu, Yachon, Chiating, Sui Fu, Luchon, and Chungking, six times before being shipped down river. Of these likins, the Yachon office is a new and more or less illegal one, as it is closed when the Literary Chancellor or any important extra-provincial official comes along that way.

**Imports.**

Tea covers nearly all the imports to Thibet. During my brief visit to Tachienlu I had not much time to go into the present condition of this trade, but several tea-merchants told me that the annual value of the trade is somewhat over 1,000,000 taels. The taxation amounts to over 20 per cent., the bulk of which sum goes to the Yen Ch'a Tao or salt and tea Taotai at Chengtu, who issues the "yin" or licenses, and holds one of the most lucrative and least responsible billets in the Empire; a share also goes to the Chinese Commissary or Chun Liang Fu of Tachienlu, an official who combines his duties of providing for the transport of troops to Thibet with the ordinary functions of a local or "father and mother" mandarin, and with the superintendence of the Thibetan king of the Minjak tribes (Chinese title, Ming-cheng-ssu) who occupies an enormous official residence in the city. The tea trade is said to have fluctuated very little for many years past, yet the figure I give is considerably higher than that given by Mr. Baker (1,814,400 rs.). But this latter amount apparently only includes the tea sent to Batang and Lhasa, while my information refers to the total export west

from Yachon and the surrounding hsiens, of which it must be noted a considerable quantity goes to Chantui and Dergé and not by the Batang route. It has been assumed, somewhat hastily I think, that if the road were open Assam tea would sweep the Yachon trade out of existence. No doubt cheap teas sent by Darjiling could undersell the Chinese teas in and near Lhasa, but a considerable quantity of the latter go north-west from Tachienlu into country too remote to be supplied from India; further a certain quantity of high class Yachon teas go in through Tachienlu, and the richer Thibetans who have a taste for these would probably not take to the Indian article. If the trade were perfectly free there seems little doubt that there would be plenty of demand for Indian teas without any diminution of the Chinese import at least for Eastern Thibet. A small quantity of cottons, chiefly American drills, are dyed at Yachon for the Thibetan market, and a considerable value in Ssŭchuan silk, chiefly scarves or "khata" used for ceremonial purposes, is sold in Tachienlu. Neither the tea-dealers or any other of the merchants have anything to do with their merchandise after it leaves Tachienlu.

The following figures of the total trade per annum were given Total. me by a Chinese merchant in whose house I stayed, and who has passed 20 years in Tachienlu; as there are no regular official returns only approximate accuracy can be hoped for in such estimates:—

	Value.	Total.
	Taels.	Taels.
<b>EXPORTS FROM THIBET.</b>		
Musk .. .. .	500,000	
Wool .. .. .	200,000	
Gold .. .. .	150,000	
Fox skin .. .. .	25,000	
Other skins .. .. .	30,000	
Rhubarb and drugs .. .. .	30,000	
		985,000
<b>IMPORTS TO THIBET.</b>		
Tea .. .. .	1,100,000	
Cottons .. .. .	10,000	
Silk and sundries .. .. .	40,000	
		1,150,000
<b>Total .. .. .</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>2,085,000</b>

Rupees, the ordinary currency of Tachienlu have been scarce lately, owing probably to the closing of the Indian mint. The number in circulation at Tachienlu varies from 10,000 to 13,000 according to the time of year. They pass current all along the main road down even to Yachon, for large payments. The cash price at Tachienlu is now 310 to 315 for the rupee, in Yachon about 10 cash less. I neither saw nor heard of any roubles.

3.—*Foreigners in Tachienlu.*

English.

Mr. A. J. Little has an agency now established and does a fair trade in wool, but not I gather with so good a profit as at Sungpan. The French firm which has a shop in Chungking has also opened a small agency in Tachienlu which is in the hands of some Roman Catholic Chinese.

French.

"Objets de Paris" and high-priced textiles are the principal goods displayed, and it is notorious that practically no trade is done.

The attempts to galvanise French commerce into existence have had little or no effect beyond the sale of a certain quantity of glassware, toys, and nick-nacks in Chungking. The "Mission Lyonnaise," on which a large sum must have been spent, has hitherto had little appreciable result. The Chinese followers of the mission made themselves extremely objectionable to the natives in the interior as I can testify in places where I have gone over the same ground, and I learn from missionaries that in some inns where the commission put up the landlords have since declined the honour of foreign guests.

Missionaries.

The French Thibetan mission has its headquarters at Tachienlu, and I received much kindness from the Bishop and Père Desjeans. These fathers have both spent more than 20 years on the Thibetan border, and as many of their Chinese converts go into Thibet their knowledge of what goes on is unrivalled. There are now two priests at Batang and one at Yerkalo, the Thibetan salt walls, six days beyond Batang; owing to recent events the position of the mission in these remote stations is said to be only "plus ou moins sur." The Chinese authorities have been compelled to protect the missionaries, but the position of the Chinese themselves seems to be very unstable.

Two members of the so-called "Thibetan band" of missionaries, which is connected with C.I.M., have rented a house at Tachienlu; they expect shortly to be joined by Mr. Polhill Turner, the head of the mission, and hope to make an advance in the direction of Batang.

I should mention that the officials at Tachienlu regarded my appearance with much suspicion. I was "shadowed" at street-corners, and runners were sent to dodge behind rocks after me when I went out shooting. The officials, unable as usual to believe the truth, imagined that I was proceeding to Batang, and had prepared a small army of observation to accompany me.

4.—*Return to Yachon.*

Ya Chia Col.

I returned to Yachon by the Ya Chia Col described by Baker. This route follows the main Thibet road for five miles from the south gate, a piece of road which in the morning is always encumbered with yak and pony caravans starting on their long westward journey. Then leaving the main road, we followed a

track up through a wide valley inhabited by a very few half-bred Tibetans. Numerous side-gorges descend into the main valley, the south end of which is closed by a magnificent range of snow mountains. On both sides of the route forests of pine trees ascend up to about 11,000 feet. These woods are the home of many ornithological prizes, such as the Amherst, Reeves, and Crossoptilon pheasants, to which time prevented me giving the attention they deserved. The last 2,000 feet of the ascent, which is by no means steep, passes through a scrub-growth of rhododendrons and by a small lake which was covered with thick ice in February. The summits of the pass, 12,800 feet, was a great snow field about a mile long with glittering peaks on both sides. Up to this point we had been favoured with glorious weather, but snow-clouds came up as we commenced the descent through a stormy wilderness. After an uncomfortable night in a miserable hut which admitted the snow in all directions, we descended to cultivated ground through a virgin forest of pine trees wreathed in snow and moss; in the afternoon we reached the cultivated valley of Mo Hsi Mien (5,000 feet) where the Chinese peasantry has completely ousted the original Thibetan owners. The people here breed some good ponies, and also search the mountains on the Thibetan side for rhubarb and drugs. As time did not admit of an excursion to Fulin via the valley of the Tung River, we left the Mo Hsi Mien valley, and after a day's scrambling up the valley of the Tung River by a rough path, rejoined the main road from Tachienlu to Yachon at a point about 15 miles below Lu Ting bridge.

The passage of the Ya Chia Col is regarded by the Chinese as a terrible undertaking, more difficult than the Che Toh, or any of the passes on the Batang road. During the summer rains no doubt the road would be almost impracticable, but in the autumn and winter it is for a good pedestrian a pleasant day's walk. My coolies suffered from mountain sickness, and the Ya Chia is celebrated for the potency of the demons which inhabit it. But I am inclined to attribute the vomiting and giddiness to the manner in which the coolies stuff themselves with rice and maize before an ascent. It is well known that the Tachienlu-Batang Road after passing the Che Toh keeps at an elevation of over 12,000 feet, except for a dip at the crossing of the Yalung River (9,300 feet according to Gill). I am therefore inclined to think that given a favourable season, the difficulty of the route into Thibet is much exaggerated. Certainly if the Ya Chia Col is the most formidable pass in the neighbourhood of Tachienlu, troops who had marched on the north-west frontier of India would find no difficulty in the Tachienlu country.

The two passes between Lu Ting Bridge and Yachon (Fei Yueh Ling, 9,000 feet, and Ta Hsiang Ling, 9,300 feet) were covered on both sides with deep snow, and swept by violent storms when I crossed. The former pass especially is a stiff obstacle, the latter formidable only if the ascent is made from the Yachon side. The main Chien Chang route slips off from the Tachienlu route on the west side of the Ta Hsiang Ling, and from this point the



traffic is very heavy, both for mules and ponies and porters. The animals mostly go to and from the Chien Chang. The imports in the order of their importance are cloth (native and foreign yarn), salt, tobacco, and paper; the exports are copper, lead, and silver.

#### 5.—*The Navigation of the Ya.*

The following notes may be of interest. From Yachon to Chia Ting, a distance by water of 120 miles, there is a fall of 1,000 feet, and the river is broken every few miles by strong rapids, many of which in low water are regular cataracts.

Navigation is possible only for bamboo rafts of a peculiar construction. The rafts are usually 65 by 12 feet. The stern is made of 20 large pieces of bamboo lashed together with strips of bamboo bark; to the ends of these slightly smaller bamboos are jointed, and so on; thus the raft tapers towards the bow, where it is some 6 to 8 feet across; the bow is warped up so as to be 2 or 3 feet above the water. Nothing whatever but bamboo is used in the construction; the water passes freely through and over the raft; and the men are working in wet feet for the greater part of the journey. In the centre of the raft a bamboo frame raised  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet above the raft is constructed; this frame is 20 to 30 feet long and 3 feet broad. Passengers and cargo liable to be spoiled by wet have to travel on this frame. There is an oar in the stern worked as a rudder by the skipper; there are usually three other rowers; the oars are all lashed to the stumps of wood and propel the raft in gondola fashion. At the fiercer rapids, a raft is an exciting, not to say alarming means of conveyance; but though destruction seems inevitable, accidents rarely happen. A raft will take about 3,500 catties of cargo at a freight of 4 cash, and when new costs 60 taels; repairs are required every year, especially after a very low water season, for then the raft is liable to be damaged by grinding over shallows. About 400 of these craft ply on the Ya, and often descend the Min as far as Sui-fu. The down cargoes consist chiefly of copper, wool and grain. All the raftmen are natives of Chiating; they accomplish the down journey in a day at highest water and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  days at lowest; tracking up the river requires from 8 to 18 days.

#### 6.—*Mining in the Chien Chang.*

In spite of the dismissal of the Viceroy Lu, his schemes for opening gold mines in the Chien Chang have not fallen to the ground. It appears that considerable sums of money were subscribed by other officials in Chengtu in support of the undertaking, and the tea merchants of Yachon complain that no opportunity of investment was afforded to the public. Mr. Tang, the Cantonese "wei yuan" in charge of the works, is a friend of the missionaries at Yachon, and recently informed them that the

mines were beginning to pay, and that much more may be expected when all the machinery arrives. These operations at present are confined to the Ma Ha hills between Yueh Hsi and Mien Ning. The trouble involved in the transport of the stamps and other machinery well illustrates the difficulty of doing anything in this country. The machinery in all weighed over 6 tons, and required 70 rafts to bring it to Yachon. Yachon coolies having never carried such things as boilers, pipes, bars, &c., found the greatest difficulty in getting over the rough hilly road to the Chien Chang; some absconded in despair and left their loads by the roadside; in some cases the peasants were pressed into service as porters, and small objects such as brass screws and bolts which are regarded as "hsi chi," or curiosities, were pilfered en route. Mr. Tang was obliged to come back to Yachon from the Chien Chang to collect the flotsam and jetsam of his machinery, and strong proclamations forbidding absconding and thieving were posted along the road.

#### 7.—*Disturbances in Eastern Thibet.*

Though the troubles in Eastern Thibet were settled last autumn, some account of them digested from the information given me partly by the French fathers, and partly by a Chinese officer who was in the expedition, is worth giving as illustrating the relations between the Chinese Government and the States of East Thibet. The district known to the Chinese as Chantui In Chantui. (in Thibetan Niarong), situated to the north-west of Tachienlu, was distracted by a quarrel between the rival "t'u-ssu," or native chiefs; Chantui is divided among several of these chiefs, the native map distinguishing Upper, Lower, and Middle Chantui. The chiefs recognised the suzerainty of China though in former days they were tributary to Lhasa, which State still had more or less shadowy claims to their allegiance. Lu, the late Viceroy of Ssüchuan, sent Commissioners to settle the disturbance and to prospect for gold, which in the form of dust is produced in considerable quantities. The Commissioners, however, were ignominiously expelled by the Thibetans. The Viceroy then sent an expedition to subdue the country, and to subject it to the ordinary jurisdiction of Chinese officials. This service was entrusted to Chang Chi, the district magistrate of Chengtu, a man of great energy. Some of his soldiers whom I met on the Tachienlu road informed me that 5,000 men went into Thibet, but I learn from the missionaries that not more than 2,000 actually passed Tachienlu. The pay was 3 taels a month; no provision, of course, was made for ambulance, commissariat, or warm clothing. The petty officers supplied food, and docked the soldiers' wages; the soldiers told me that at the end of the month they never got more than 500 cash. Many of the men mutinied at Luting Chiao Bridge, and refused to proceed on the ground that they might get hurt in the wars; many others

suffered from frost-bite and exposure crossing the Che Toh, as they were chiefly men from the plains of Ssüchuan and Anhwui. However, Chang "t'ung ling," to give him his military title, succeeded in reaching Chantui with a considerable body of men armed with rifles from the Chengtu arsenal; there were no quick-firing guns or modern artillery, but as the Thibetans were divided among themselves, and were only provided with matchlocks and native powder, General Chang succeeded in establishing himself in Chantui. The telegraph had been run up to Tachienlu, and a survey was made for an extension to Chantui. If Chang had gone no further all might have been well, but in the spring of 1897 he obtained leave from the Viceroy to proceed further west into the State of Dergé, which had hitherto paid tribute to Lhasa. The chief of Dergé had been dispossessed of his power by his wife and his son, and appealed to Chang for aid. It appears that the chiefs of Eastern Thibet greatly prefer the suzerainty of China to that of Lhasa; for the former usually implies no more than a nominal subjection, while the Lamas demand a heavy tribute in gold. Chang, however, came to conquer the country; he treacherously secured the persons of the chief and his son; sent them prisoners to Chengtu and then seized all the property of the chief and his adherents, which consisted chiefly of gold and gold ornaments. Some of the soldiers escaped with their loot, and sold their gold for silver, silks, &c., in Yachon and Chiating during the summer of 1897.

In Dergé.

Retreat of  
Chinese.

Meanwhile the Lhasa Government had become thoroughly alarmed at the unwonted activity of the Chinese, who had thus established themselves on the borders of Lhasa territory. I was informed by the Bishop at Tachienlu that the Lamas attempted to enlist Thibetans in Batang, Litang, and Chantui to attack the Chinese, but since the Sikkim War the power of the Lamas to raise an army from the outlying parts of Thibet (many of those who fought in the Sikkim War came from near Tachienlu) has gone; the Lhasa Government accordingly appealed to Peking through the Tartar General, now the Acting Viceroy of Ssüchuan, the personal enemy of the Viceroy Lu. The Lamas threatened that if the troops were not withdrawn, they would open negotiations with the Indian Government, would not receive the Imperial Resident, and would make their own arrangements with reference to Sikkim. This I learn both from the missionaries and an officer of Chang, a native of Chungking. In the autumn the Chief of Dergé died in confinement at Chengtu, and the state of affairs in Thibet was made the ground for an impeachment of the Viceroy. Orders were sent from Peking for the release and restoration of the son of the deceased chief; the Viceroy Lu was recalled, the Tartar-General being put in his place; Chang and all his troops were immediately withdrawn from Chantui and Dergé, and the country was handed over to Lhasa, "i ha jang kei Lhasa" being the expression used to me. This amounted to a complete abandonment of all advantages gained, and a complete reversal of the Viceroy Lu's policy. It is the opinion of the missionaries that







there was no reason whatever except the orders from Peking why Chang should not have carried out Lu's policy of making Chantui and Dergé, the richest States of East Thibet, an integral part of Ssüchuan; Yamens were in course of construction. Only about 1,000 soldiers came out of Dergé with Chang, but if they had been planted as colonists in the country they would with the small Chinese traders already there have formed the nucleus of a Chinese population. The Thibetans unarmed and disunited would have been quite unable to resist; indeed, it appears that since the Sikkim War the power of Lhasa over the other States has greatly diminished. The Bishop of Tachienlu said emphatically that to go anywhere in inhabited Thibet would be a "promenade militaire" for a handful of European troops.

The question of the renewal of the Sikkim Treaty is spoken of as the "hua chia ti ssu ch'ing," *i.e.*, the boundary question, and is much discussed both by the French missionaries and the Chinese officials and merchants, the former hoping and the latter fearing that something may be done to open Thibet. Everyone assumed that I must know all about it and eagerly questioned me. It is clear that there have been two contradictory principles in the Chinese policy, firstly, there is the Peking Government which only cares about saving its face by receiving nominal acknowledgments of submission from Lhasa, about keeping out the foreigner and about having "wu ssu" or no trouble; secondly, there are the Chengtu provincial officials who regard the Thibetans as barbarians (*Man Chia* is the usual term for them), and look on Eastern Thibet as an Eldorado, where gold can be procured in any quantity, and which is a natural appanage of Ssüchuan. The Imperial Resident, Wên Hui, who appears to be a very weak old man, arrived in Tachienlu twice during 1896 and 1897, and twice returned to Chengtu, having been frightened back by the threats of the Lhasa Government. The main road, however, was never really blocked to ordinary traffic. He finally left Tachienlu in November, 1897, after having held an official enquiry into Chang's conduct when that official came out from Dergé to Tachienlu. It is said, however, that the enquiry was confined to ascertaining the amount of Chang's booty, and to relieving him of a share of it. While officials of this sort are sent to Thibet, any arrangement made between them and the Indian Government will be treated and will be intended to be treated as utterly nugatory, both by the Chinese and the Lhasa Government.

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