
NOTES ON
ANCIENT CHINESE DOCUMENTS

DISCOVERED ALONG THE HAN FRONTIER WALL IN THE DESERT OF
TUN-HUANG

A CHINESE EXPEDITION ACROSS THE PAMIRS
AND HINDUKUSH A.D. 747

INTRODUCTION TO THE
DOCUMENTS CHINOIS DECOUVERTS
PAR AUREL STEIN

BY
CHAVANNES
AND
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敦煌考古記
唐代中國人帕米爾探險記

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INTRODUCTION

TO THE " DOCUMENTS CHINOIS DECOUVERTS
par Aurel STEIN
dans les Sables du Turkestan Oriental "

by

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Translated from the French

by

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FOREWORD

M. Stein has thought fit to entrust to me the study of the Chinese documents, written for the most part on wood, which he has recovered from the sands of central Asia. This was a formidable honour, and I was not slow to appreciate the fact when I found myself faced with about two thousand fragments, which had to be examined one by one through a magnifying glass, in order to distinguish between those which could not be used and those capable of being deciphered. Having thus eliminated one-half of the wooden slips that constitute the great mass of these texts, I had to read those which remained, to classify them in groups,

and to translate them into French. To succeed in this undertaking I have availed myself of various helpers whom I am happy to mention here. In the first place, I have had at my disposal the transcription which had been produced by M. Stein's "lettré," Mr. Chiang Hsiao-yüan 蔣孝琬; but the latter had only made a hurried reading such as is possible in the course of a journey, and it left unsolved nearly all the real difficulties. Later, I had the good fortune to meet in Paris two Chinese students who interested themselves in my researches with a goodwill that was of infinite value to me. With Mr. Wu Ch'in-hsün 吳勤訓 I studied all the slips again, and, as a result, the text of many of them has been fixed in a manner that leaves no doubt. But a great number of problems still remained unsolved, and I therefore undertook the task of making comparisons, collecting together all the slips on which any doubtful character appeared. By this method it was possible to carry the interpretation further. Finally, assisted by Mr. Wei Huai 魏懷, I proceeded to make a general revision which enabled me to correct many errors. I wish to express here my gratitude to Mr. Wu 吳 and Mr. Wei 魏.

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What was the right method to follow in publishing these documents? I might have confined myself to the inclusion of only those of which the sense was certain. I should in that case have disregarded those of which the reading was doubtful or the translation hypothetical, and I should have omitted all those which were too fragmentary to allow of the text being restored with certainty. I was of opinion that this over-cautious method was not the right one. It was better, even at the price of numerous errors, to place the scientific world in possession of M. Stein's discoveries in their entirety. In short, the most important thing was that scholars should have access to all the materials which I myself had at my disposal, and that they should be able, by new efforts, to improve upon the results which I have obtained. I have realized, better than any one, the risks which I have run in undertaking the task entrusted to me by M. Stein. So it is by no means in a presumptuous spirit that I have performed it; I have only done what I could, and I shall be thankful for all the corrections which may be proposed by the erudite scholars who are anxious to collaborate in developing our knowledge of Sinology.

INTRODUCTION.

The Chinese documents studied in this volume can be divided into different groups.

The first series (Nos. 1-709), which is by far the most important, comes from several localities, the most easterly of which is to the North of TUN-HUANG, 敦煌, about $94^{\circ} 30'$ longitude, while the most westerly is situated about $93^{\circ} 10'$ longitude, slightly north of 40° latitude¹; the wooden slips, of which this series is essentially composed, date back to the *Han* dynasty, and are distributed over a period between the beginning of the first century B.C. and the middle of the second century A.D. Such among them as contain an exact date can be allotted chronologically as follows :

Date	Slips	Date	Slips	Date	Slips
98	271	1	593 (?)	77	580
96	304, ² 308 (?)	3	430 ³	87	390
95	306 (?), 309 (?)	5	400	94	537
94	305, 430 (?)	8	585	137	536
68	255	9	367	153	680 (?)
65	37, 256 (?)	12	272		
64	262 (?)	14	307		
63	9—24, 39	14-19	371, 372		
61	38, 40, 447 (?)	15	356 (?), 482		
60	42, 43, 181 (?)	17	368, 369		
59	25—35, 41, 44	20-21	592		
58	39, 45, 46, 87 (?), 158, 159, 160, 392	35	562		
57	36, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 91, 92, 93	43	483		
56	58, 399	46	484		
53	446	50	563, 564		
52	413, 414	53	565		
48	338 (?)	55	485		
45	339 (?)	56	486		
39	428, 429	61	566		
		67	535 ⁴		
		68	579		
		75	613, 614		

1. Cf. A. STEIN, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, Vol. II, pp. 50-65 and pp. 92-156.
2. In line 15 of p. 71, for 29 Dec. 95 B.C., read 30 Dec. 96 B.C.
3. In the last line of p. 96, for 4 A.D., read 3 A.D.
4. In line 15 of p. 116, for 21st Jan. 65 A.D., read 21st Jan. 67 A.D.

It is to be noticed that, among the documents of this series there are a few writings on paper. The majority are Buddhist writings of the time of the *T'ang* dynasty (Nos. 710-720), and have been put together accidentally, side by side with slips of the *HAN* period. But three of them, Nos. 706-708, appear almost certainly to date back to the second century A.D., and are thus the most ancient specimens of paper that exist.¹

The second series (Nos. 721-950), comprises writings on wood and paper of the *CHIN* period. With the exception of a few wooden slips (Nos. 940-950), which come from Niya² where M. Stein had previously found many belonging to the latter half of the third century A.D.,³ all the other documents composing this series were discovered by M. Stein to the North of the marshes, now dry, that were at one time part of the Lopnor.⁴ The locality from which they come lies slightly west of 90° longitude, by 40° 31' latitude, and it had already been visited in 1901 by Sven Hedin. It is probable that it occupies the position of the ancient kingdom of *Lou-lan*⁵ 樓蘭. The writings brought back by Sven Hedin have not up to the present time been published. They have only been the subject of a small article by K. Himly, allowing us to attribute them to the years between 264 and 270 A.D.⁶ In 1909 a young Japanese explorer, Mr. Tachibana, halted at the same place, and was able to make a few addi-

1. Two of these fragments are reproduced in facsimile on pl. XX, Nos. 707 and 708. Another fragment dating probably from the first half of the second century A.D. has been studied with a microscope by J. v. WIESNER, who has published the results of his researches in an article entitled "*Ueber die ältesten bis jetzt aufgefundenen Hadernpapiere (Sitzungsberichte der Akademie des Wissenschaften in Wien,*" phil. hist. Klasse 168, Band 5, Abhandlung 1911.)

2. Cf. "*RUINS of DESERT CATHAY,*" Vol. I, pp. 272-299.

3. Cf. "*ANCIENT KHOTAN,*" Vol. I, pp. 537-542.

4. Cf. "*RUINS of DESERT CATHAY,*" Vol. I, pp. 376-412.

5. Chinese authors usually identify *Lou lan* 樓蘭 and *Shan-shan* 鄯善, but this identification is only politically correct and must not be accepted in a geographical sense. It is a fact that in B.C. 77 the kingdom which had up to that time had its administrative centre at *Lou-lan*, moved the seat of its government to *Shan-shan* (Charklik), south-west of the Lop-nor; but even if the kingdom of *Lou-lan* thus became the kingdom of *Shan-shan*, the site *Lou-lan* survived, and this is the place which we frequently find mentioned in the documents of the third century A.D., dug up north of the ancient lake by Sven Hedin and M. Stein. Cf. Albert Hermann, "*Die alten Seidenstrassen zwischen China und Syrien,*" pp. 101-104.

6. Cf. Karl Himly, "*Sven Hedins Ausgrabungen am alten Lop-nor* (Petermanns Mitt., Vol. XLVIII, 1902, pp. 288-290).

tional discoveries: we owe to him, in particular, a rough copy of a letter written on paper, which can be assigned to about the year 324 A.D.¹

M. Stein's documents on wood furnish us with the following dates:—

263 A.D. No. 738	268 A.D. Nos. 725, 728
264 A.D. ,, 721 (?)	269 A.D. ,, 726, 727 (?), 741
265 A.D. ,, 722, 723, 730	270 A.D. ,, 729, 733, 735, 736, 748 (?)
266 A.D. ,, 724, 739 ²	330 A.D. ,, 886

The documents on paper are dated A.D. 270 (No. 896) and A.D. 312 (Nos. 910 and 912).

The third series of documents (No. 951-991) is made up of the writings on wood and on paper of the *T'ang* period, which come, some (Nos. 951-974) from Mazar-tagh³ on the left bank of the Khotan River,⁴ and the others from Mazartoghruk (Nos. 974-980) and Balawaste (Nos. 981-983), two districts which lie respectively north and south of the oasis of Domoko, east of Khotan.⁵ To these must be added a few Buddhist fragments which were found, some south of Luckchun,⁶ others at Toyuk,⁶ north-east of Kara-kho-ja.

Of these various groups of documents, that which dates from the *Han* period, is by reason of the remote date to which it belongs, at once the most important and the richest in information of all kinds, and by reference to this new historical source we may try to reconstitute the life of the Chinese garrisons in the distant posts of Central Asia during the centuries which immediately preceded and followed the birth of Christ.

1. See in *Tōyō gakuhō* 東洋學報, t. I, fasc. 2, M. Haneda's article, where there is a description of the documents brought back from central Asia by the Otani mission of which M. Tachibana was a member. The letter of *Lé Po*, chang-shih of the Western Regions in A.D. 324, is reproduced in facsimile and in a transcription on p. 54 of this article. Cf. the notes by M. Péri on this subject in the *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, 1910, p. 642 and 1911, p. 465.

2. In line 18 of p. 160, for "vingt-deuxième jour du deuxième mois" (1st March, A.D. 265), read "vingt-deuxième (jour) du douzième mois" (18th February, A.D. 266).

3. Cf. "*RUINS of DESERT CATHAY*," Vol. II, pp. 417-419.

4. Cf. "*RUINS of DESERT CATHAY*," Vol. I, pp. 255-256.

5. Cf. "*RUINS of DESERT CATHAY*," Vol. II, pp. 357-358.

6. Cf. "*RUINS of DESERT CATHAY*," Vol. II, p. 359.

The portion of the ancient great Wall along which M. Stein made his memorable discoveries does not belong to the defensive system organized by *Ch'in Shih Huang-ti* 秦始皇帝. In the year B.C. 214,¹ *Ch'in Shih Huang-ti*, who had then been emperor seven years, decided to join together the various walls of defence which the feudal rulers of the North had built on the northern frontier to protect themselves against the invasions of the *Hsiung-nu* 匈奴.² Thus was conceived the gigantic undertaking of the great Wall. This great Wall of *Ch'in Shih Huang-ti*, the line of which we can follow on a Chinese map of the year 1137,³ started from *Lin-t'ao* 臨洮, in the West, and ended at *Shan-hai-kuan* 山海關, in the East.⁴ *Lin-t'ao* is to-day the second prefecture of *MIN* 岷, and is situated in south *Kan-su* near the bend of the river *T'ao* 洮, a tributary on the right bank of the *Huang-ho*.

The great Wall of *Ch'in Shih Huang-ti* was a defensive work ; the additions made to it from the western end about a century later were built for the purpose of offensive policy. In B.C. 126, *Chang Ch'ien* 張騫 had returned from the long and perilous embassy which, originally intended to cement relations with the *Yüeh-chih* 月支, settled as it was supposed in the Ili Valley, actually succeeded in reaching the banks of the Oxus, and revealed to China not only the economic situation of the principalities in eastern Turkestan, but also the commercial importance of the great Western civilizations. From that time onwards the Emperor *WU* resolved to open the road to the West by cutting a passage at the exact point where the Turkish hordes and Tibetan tribes met, and where in consequence there was least cohesion between the various nomads who surrounded China. This result was obtained when, in B.C. 121, at the conclusion of general *Ho Ch'ü*-

1. This date is indicated in *Ssu-ma Ch'ien* (Ch. VI, French translation. II, p. 168).

2. On the walls of the feudal kingdoms, before the time of *Ch'in Shih Huang-ti*, see *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient*, 1903, p. 221, No. 4.

3. Cf. B.E.F.E.O., 1903, p. 214 et seq., Map A.

4. Cf. *Ssu-ma Ch'ien*, chap. LXXXVIII, p. 1 r°, "MUNG T'ÏEN built the great Wall. Profiting by the configuration of the ground and making use of natural obstacles he constructed a barrier which began at *Lin-t'ao* and ended at *Liao-tung*."—*Ch'ien Han shu*, chap. XCVI, a.p. 1 v°: "*Ch'in Shih Huang ti* drove back the Barbarians and built the great Wall to mark the boundary of the Central Empire ; but in the West he did not go further than *Lin-t'ao*."

ping's 霍去病 glorious campaigns, the districts of *Kan-chou* and *Liang-chou* were annexed to the Empire. This was immediately followed by the establishment of the Command of *Chiu-ch'üan* 酒泉, the *t'ai shou* 太守 or governor of which lived in the locality now called *SU-CHOU* 肅州.

Later colonists were sent to these new territories, which grew in importance and gradually split into three new Commands, that of *Wu-wei* 武威, now *Liang-chou* 涼州, that of *Chang-yi* 張掖, now called *Kan-chou* 甘州, and that of *Tun-huang* 敦煌, which name has survived to this very day.¹ At the same time, to ensure freedom of passage the governor had a rampart built, which started from *Ling-chü* 令居 and ran in a westerly direction.² *Ling-chü* must have been in the neighbourhood of the present sub-prefecture of *P'ing-fan* 平番, west of the prefecture of *Ian-chou fu* 蘭州 in the province of *Kan-su*. This point marked the first limit to the expansion of the Chinese military

1. In the year B.C. 121, immediately following the mention of the murder of the *Hsiu-ch'ü* 休屠 king and the surrender of the *Hun-hsieh* 昆邪 king, the principal Annals of the Emperor *Wu* (*Ch'ien Han shu*, chap. VI, p. 6 v°), add: "From their territory were made the Commands of *Wu-wei* 武威 (*Liang-chou*) and *Chiu ch'üan* 酒泉 (*Su-chou*)." In the same chapter (p. 9 v°), in the year B.C. 111 we read that, after a campaign conducted by the Chinese generals in the desert of Gobi, "the Commands of *Wu-wei* and *Chiu-ch'üan* were subdivided and those of *Chang-yi* 張掖 (*Kan-chou*) and *Tun-huang* 敦煌 were established." As has been noticed by the critical annotators of the period of *Ch'ien lung* (at the end of chap. XXVIII, b. of the *Ch'ien Han shu*), it does not appear that we have any grounds for attaching importance to the information given in the geographical section of *Ch'ien Han shu* (chap. XXVIII, b. p. 2 r°—v°), according to which the Commands of *Chang-yi* and *Chiu-ch'üan* would only have been established in B.C. 104, the Command of *Wu-wei* in B.C. 101, and that of *Tun-huang* in B.C. 88. According to the *Tzū chih t'ung chien* (chap. XX, p. 4 v°), of *Ssu-ma Kuang*, which gives us the most probable evidence, the first step taken was the establishment in B.C. 115 of the Command of *Chiu-ch'üan*; from this was detached later the Command of *Wu-wei*. The same work (chap. XXI, p. 9 v°) assigns to the year B.C. 111 the establishment of the Commands of *Chang-yi* and *Tun-huang*. This shows that the Command of *Chiu-ch'üan* was that from which the three others must have sprung: it must have directed the pushing of colonists into Central Asia and this, in fact, is the part which we see it playing in slip No. 60.

2. *Ch'ien Han shu*, chap. XCVI, a, p. 1 v°: 始築令居以西。

colonisation towards the West.¹ By extending the rampart westwards protection was afforded to the road which ran through central Asia. Its ultimate aim was the safeguarding of the caravans which established commercial relations between the Empire and the tribes of Turkestan. This is the reason why the extreme point of this new portion of the great Wall was called the Pass of the Gate of Jade, *Yü-mên-kuan* 玉門關; for it was jade which constituted the most precious ware carried to China across the sands of Central Asia. It was in B.C. 108 that a continuous line of posts and small forts was established from *Chiu-ch'üan* (*Su-chou*) right up to the Gate of Jade.²

Where was this famous Gate of Jade? According to the slips found at the point T. XIV it appears probable that from the year B.C. 94 (cf. No. 305) the gate stood on the site so marked slightly west of 94° longitude. An inscription, however, would tend to prove that a few years earlier the great Wall did not stretch so far west. We know actually that in B.C. 103 when *Li Kuang-li* 李廣利 returned with the remnants of his army from his first and fruitless expedition against the country of *Ta-yüan*, 大宛, the Emperor, enraged at this set-back, forbade him to re-enter by the Gate of Jade, threatening the death-penalty to any soldier who should attempt to pass through it. *Li Kuang-li* halted therefore at *Tun-huang* 敦煌.³ This evidence would lead us to infer that in B.C. 103 the Gate of Jade, and consequently the extreme point of the great Wall, was still east of *Tun-huang*.

1. *Ch'ien Han shu*, chap. XCVI a, p. 9 r°: "In 119 B.C. the HAN moved north of the river, and from the *Sho-fang* in the east to *Ling-chü* in the west they dug a large number of irrigation canals, appointing officials to look after the fields, with a force of officers and soldiers numbering fifty or sixty thousand." 漢度河自朔方以西至今居往往通渠置田官吏卒五六萬人。

2. Cf. *Ssü-ma Ch'ien*, chap. CXXIII, p. 6 r° 於是酒泉列亭障至玉門矣; cf. *Ch'ien Han shu*, chap. LXI, p. 3 r° and *Tzü chih't'ung chien* for the year B.C. 101.

3. Cf. *Ssü-ma Ch'ien*, chap. CXXIII, p. 7 r°: 天子聞之大怒而使使遮玉門曰軍有敢入者輒斬之武師悉因留敦煌

"The Son of Heaven learning (the disaster of *Li Kuang-li*) was much angered, and accordingly sent envoys to bar the Gate of Jade, declaring that any member of the army who should dare pass through (the gate) would be immediately beheaded. The general of *Êrh-shih* (*Li Kuang-li*) was afraid, and that was why he remained at *Tun-huang*."

It was after the second expedition of *Li Kuang-li* against *Ta-yuan* in B.C. 102 and 101 that the great Wall seems to have been carried forward. At this time relations with the West were being developed. In order to guarantee the free passage of the envoys and the caravans, and to assure their supplies, military posts were established at intervals from *Tun-huang* as far as the salt marshes, i.e., as far as Lop Nor.¹ The researches made on the spot by M. Stein have shown that two sections of the great Wall must have been built at that time. The first of these formed a line of defence across the shotts or salt lagoons which lie to the west of longitude 94°, and the strongest point of resistance was at T. XIV, which about B.C. 94 must have been the Gate of Jade. The second section extended further towards the west as far as longitude 93° 30' and ended at the site T. IV, where the Gate of Jade may possibly have stood about B.C. 39 (cf. No. 428). Leaving the site T. IV, the road ran south-west as far as Lop Nor, but the Wall from that point was not continuous. The Chinese were content to establish small forts at intervals, in order to safeguard the halting places for the caravans. The Romans adopted the same system when, for example, they extended their influence in Tripoli beyond the *limes*, establishing, as they pushed their way into the interior, a number of covering posts which ensured the safety of their communications.²

Among these Chinese fortresses, isolated in the middle of the desert, one of the most important appears to have been that which occupied point T. VI, somewhere about longitude 93° 15'. A very large number of slips have been dug up there by M. Stein, and they are spread over a period between the years B.C. 65 and 56. This period actually corresponds with a great increase in the military power of the *Han*. In B.C. 77 the Chinese general *Fu Chieh-tzū* 傅介子 killed the king of *Lou-lan* 樓蘭 and re-established his kingdom under the name of *Shan-shan* 鄯善. Thanks to this success the Chinese became masters of the Southern road³ and in B.C. 60 the capitulation of a prince of the *Hsiung-nu* delivered to them the North road⁴ as well. It was then, in

1. cf. *Tzū chih t'ung chien*, for the year 101 B.C.: 於是自敦煌西至鹽澤往往起亭; cf. the same evidence in *Ssu-ma Chien*, chap. CXXIII, p. 8 v°, and in *Ch'ien Han shu*, chap. XCVI, a, p. 1 v°.

2. Cf. R. Cagnat, "La Frontière militaire de la Tripolitaine, *Mémoires de l'Acad. des Inscriptions*", t. XXXIX, p. 28.

3. Cf. "Commentaire du *Chouei king*," in *T'oung pao*, 1905, p. 567.

4. Cf. "*T'oung pao*," 1907, p. 154, n. 1.

B.C. 60 for the first time, that a Protector General, 都護, charged with the supervision of both Northern and Southern regions, was appointed in Eastern Turkestan. The first officer to hold this post, *Chêng Chi* 鄭吉, had his residence at *Wu-lei* 烏壘 near Hami. From this moment the power of China began to develop rapidly, and in consequence the documents in M. Stein's collection belonging to this period are more numerous.

Another period at which Chinese policy was very active is that of the usurper *Wang Mang* 王莽. We have slips dated respectively A.D. 8 (No. 585; *Wang Mang* was already all-powerful at that time), A.D. 9 (No. 367), A.D. 12 (No. 272), A.D. 14 (No. 307,) 15 A.D. (No. 482), A.D. 17 (Nos. 368 and 369), A.D. 20 and 21 (No. 592). These texts tend to contradict the evidence of the historians. According to *Pan Ku* it would appear that *Wang Mang* provoked a rupture between the *Hsiung-nu* and China in the year A.D. 9 by clumsily altering the shape and lettering of the seal which had been conferred on the *shan-yü* or chief of the *Hsiung-nu*, and that from this time onwards the Western countries seceded.¹ In reality *Wang Mang* appears to have maintained the prestige of the Chinese arms in the West until the end of his reign, and it was during the disturbed period at the rise of the second *Han* dynasty that the power of China suffered a momentary eclipse.

With regard to the eastern *Han* dynasty, our slips give us dates which are spread out over the whole of a century, from the year A.D. 35 to A.D. 137. They mark the period during which the eastern *Han* pursued an energetic policy in their relations with the West, and about that time also were established the commercial dealings to which Marinus of Tyre and Ptolemy bear witness.

II

These documents which date from B.C. 98 to A.D. 137 have a considerable historical importance. First, they are the most ancient Chinese manuscripts known to-day. The bamboo slips of *Chu shu chi nien* 竹書紀年, which must have dated back to the year B.C. 300 and were dug up in A.D. 281, have now definitely disappeared²; while the few wooden slips of the *Han* era, which were discovered in *Shan-hsi* during the period *hsüan-ho* (A.D. 1119-1125), have not come down to us, and we possess only

1. Cf. "*T'oung pao*," 1907, p. 155, n. 2.

2. Cf. Appendix I in vol. V of my translation of "*Ssu-ma Ch'ien*."

a poor copy of one of them.¹ It is, therefore, to M. Stein that we owe the discovery of the sole *Han* writings which we have in their original form.

From a paleographical point of view the information which can be drawn from them is most important. We can study in them the writing which in China is commonly called *chang-ts'ao* 章草 because it is the method used by the author of the famous vocabulary *Chi chiu chang* 急就章.² Hitherto our knowledge of this writing has been confined to copies of copies, which were very far from the original, but thanks to M. Stein numerous authentic specimens have now been discovered.

1. This slip can be interpreted with the help of a notice by *Chang Chü* 張駒, dated A.D. 1170, which was reproduced, about the middle of the fourteenth century in the "*Ku k'o ch'ung ch'ao*" 古刻叢鈔 of *T'ao Tsung-yi* 陶宗儀 (pp. 2, v, ° 3, v° of the edition of *Hsio ku chai chin shih ts'ung shu* 學古齋金石叢書.) It contains a military order relative to a campaign against the tribes of Tibet 羌 which runs as follows: 永初二年六月丁未朔廿日丙寅得車騎將軍莫府文書上郡屬國都尉二千石守丞廷義縣令三水十月丁未到府受印綬發夫討畔羌急急如律令馬與疋驢二百頭日給。

As far as this text, which appears very incorrect, can be translated, it would mean: "In the second year *yung-ch'u* (B.C. 108), in the sixth month, the first day of which was *ting-wei*, on the twentieth day, which was called *ping-yin*, a letter was received from the secretariat (莫=暮) attached to the general commanding the chariots and horsemen; (it runs:), "*San-shui*," who is sub-prefect of *T'ing-yi* and who is under the orders of the military commandant of the kingdom subject to the Command" (chün) of *Shang*, holding the title of *shou-ch'êng*, with a salary of two thousand "*shih*," is directed to appear before the secretariat in the tenth month, on the day *ting-wei*; he will there receive a seal and a badge of office empowering him to undertake a campaign for the punishment of the rebellious *Ch'iang* (Tibetans). These orders are to be executed forthwith. Each day he will be provided with forty horses and two hundred asses."

It will be noticed, first of all, that the chronological information in this text is incorrect: the sixth month of the second year *yung-ch'u* begins with the 32nd day of the cycle, and not with the day *ting-wei*, which is the 44th day of the cycle; moreover the day *ting-wei*, the 44th in the cycle, cannot be placed in the tenth month, which begins with the 60th day of the cycle. For the information regarding the days to be exact, it would be necessary to understand that the date of the year is incorrect, and in place of "the second year *yung ch'u*" (A.D. 108), we should have to read "the first year *yen-p'ing*" (A.D. 106). Secondly it would seem necessary to read "*T'ing-yi* who is sub-prefect of *San-shui*," instead of "*San-shui* who is sub-prefect of *T'ing-yi*." In point of fact *T'ing-yi* is not the name of a sub-prefecture, whereas the sub-prefecture of *San-shui* lay in the time of the *Han* north of the present secondary prefecture of *Ku-yüan* 固原, which is under the orders of the prefecture of *P'ing-liang* 平涼 in the province of *Kan-su*.—Finally, the formula 急急如律令 never appears in this context in M. Stein's slips, and one wonders whether the reading of the archaeologists of the twelfth century was not influenced by the remembrance of formulae which often figure on Taoist charms intended to maintain the ascendancy over evil spirits. (Cf. further on slip No. 137, in this connection).

2. On "*Chi Chiu chang*," see p. 1 *et seq.*

It is not only in connection with the paleography of the *Han* period that M. Stein's slips are important; they give us information also on the material used for writing at the beginning of the Christian era. Certainly M. Stein's first expedition had already discovered, at Niya, wooden slips dating from the beginning of the fourth century A.D., and our views on the general nature and appearance of the official documents in ancient China had become from that time onwards far clearer than before. But the excavations made in the second expedition furnish us with accurate knowledge of several new points. In the first place we find here, besides documents dealing with various matters, the remains of actual books, and we see how, by the notches cut in the edges, it was possible to put together these wooden plates so as to form a series; we do not, however, understand exactly how the correct order of the slips was assured, for there are no numbers on them to take the place of paging, and we cannot discover how it was possible to restore the right order when some accidental cause had upset it.¹ In the second place, besides the flat slips written generally on one side only, which constitute the great majority of our documents, we find prismatic slips, most often triangular, inscribed sometimes on all three faces, sometimes only on their two front faces.² These prismatic slips, which are called 觚, are found for the first time in connection with this date. There is also a third fact which seems to me to have its interest. Hitherto it has been supposed that slips belonging to Chinese antiquity were always written on bamboo, and it appeared as though the use of ordinary wood was confined to Eastern Turkestan. But among the slips dug up by M. Stein there is at least one, No. 206, which apparently comes from the capital of the Western Han, *Hsi-an fu* 西安府; at any rate it contains the usual phrase: "The decree of the Emperor is: Approved." Now this formula can only emanate from the imperial Chancellor's office. It is, therefore, possible that the records made in the office of the imperial Chancellor at the time of the Western *Han* were inscribed on wood and not on bamboo. Lastly it is noticeable that a good many of these can only have been obtained by means of a paint-brush, and we must therefore no longer admit the use of wooden pens for the purpose of writing these characters. If wooden pens were actually in use they must have been used for other writings than Chinese.

1. (On this question, see now Sir Aurel STEIN "Notes on ancient Chinese documents," in "The New China Review," 1921, Vol. III, p. 243-253.—P. PELLEROT.)

2. Cf. Nos. 1, 2, 137, 263, 316, 428, 451, 467, 504, 697.

III

I shall now endeavour to show what information may be gathered from the writings upon these slips. In point of fact, we find ourselves faced with documents which form archives, and the majority of them consist of official documents concerning the daily life of small garrisons stationed in the most distant outposts of the Empire.

The troops in the garrisons, 戍卒 as they were called¹, are often mentioned in the history of China. Thus the "*Ch'ien Han shu*" (chap. XCIV, b, p. 3 v°) speaks of garrison troops which guard the boundary 備塞戍卒; in another place (chap. XCIV, p. 4 r°) we are shown the risks which would have been run in removing the garrisons or in decreasing the number of those who kept watch.²

Some of our slips describe most exactly the origin of the soldiers sent into these posts in the Far West. They tell us to which station 里 a man belonged, in which subprefecture 縣 this district lay, and under which command 郡 this subprefecture fell. We are told, for instance, that in the locality which I have called T. VI, about B.C. 58, there were five soldiers who came from the country South-West of *Shan-hsi* 山西, near the *Huang-ho* (Nos. 72-75-77); another came from *Ssu-ch'uan* 四川 (No. 43), one from *Ho-nan* 河南 (No. 183), and another from *Tun-huang* itself, and this last had, therefore, been recruited on the spot (No. 62). Thus the majority of men stationed at the site T. VI about the middle of the first century A.D. were natives of South-West *Shan-hsi*. In the other posts we find three soldiers who were natives of the districts of *K'ai fêng-fu* 開封 or *Ho-nan fu* 河南, in *Ho-nan* (Nos. 416, 434, 456), two men from the South-West of *Shan-hsi* (No. 550), and nine from the Commands of the Far West (Nos. 342, 392, 417, 574, 579, 580, 592). The information which we possess allows us to state definitely that the garrison troops of the West were composed of men drawn from *Shan-hsi* and *Ho-nan* and of men collected on the spot, in almost equal numbers.

It is probable that the men that came from outside the station were hard-labour convicts. This seems to be the evidence which

1. Cf. Nos. 72, 77, 392, 434, 456, 550, 551.

2. The expression 候望 is explained by the passage in the "*Biography of Hsien-tsang*," where mention is made of the five watch-towers which the pilgrim had to reach successively after leaving the Chinese frontier; the biographer adds: 候望者居之 "the persons charged with keeping the look-out live there," (cf. Julien, "*Vie de Hiouen-tsang*," p. 19).

we can draw from slip No. 263, where we find an expression applied to eight men which is the judicial term to denote deportees.

These soldiers were distributed throughout the *t'ing* 亭 or stations, and the unit garrisoned in a *t'ing* was called a *tui* 隊.¹ We might be tempted to translate this word "battalion," but this would be incorrect, for the *tui* is very far from being the numerical equivalent of a battalion, it would be much nearer to what we call a company commanded by a captain. The *tui* must have actually consisted of a unit of about a hundred and fifty men,² though it is probable that in the most distant posts the numbers were even smaller, for the difficulty of supplies had to be considered.

Each company had its own particular name. Several boasted of triumphs over the barbarians, and there was therefore the *Ling-hu* 凌胡 company "which oppresses the *Hu*,"³ the *Yen-hu* 厭胡 company "which beats back the *Hu*,"⁴ the *P'o-hu* 破胡 company "which crushes the *Hu*,"⁵ and the *T'un-hu* 吞胡 company "which swallows the *Hu*."⁶ Others claimed that their calling was to enlarge the power of the Emperor. Such were the *Kuang-ch'ang* 廣昌 company "which increases prosperity,"⁸ the *Yang-wei* 揚威 company "which raises prestige,"⁹ the *Hsien-wei* 顯威 company "which manifests prestige,"¹⁰ the *An-han* 安漢 company "which ensures peace for the *Han*,"¹¹

1. Cf. Nos. 432 and 552, where the meaning of the expressions appear to be capable of similar extension in each case. Only one *tui* had to reside in one *t'ing*, and one *t'ing* alone was large enough to hold a complete *tui*.—By error in Nos. 150, 173, 208, 432, 437, 493, the word *tui* has been translated "battalion."

(Professor Chavannes' text has been translated as it stands, but it requires emendation, as the Chinese character which Professor Chavannes supposed to be *tui*, "company," is as a matter of fact another form of 燧 *sui*, meaning here "fire-signal tower."—P. PELLLOT.)

2. Cf. No. 198.

3. Cf. Nos. 42, 45, 47, 48, 56, 63-70, 258

4. Cf. Nos. 49, 63, 71, 136, 138, 139, 268.

5. Cf. No. 621.

6. Cf. No. 437.—In the time of the *Han* certain men's names were formed in exactly the same way: thus we find a *Jên P'o-hu* 任破胡 ("Ch'ien Han shu," chap. XVIII, p. 11 v°), a *Lu P'o-hu* 呂破胡 (ibid., chap. VII, p. 1 v°); the "*Chi chiu chang*" gives us the names of *Kuo P'o-hu* 郭破胡 and *Ch'iao Mich-hu* 焦滅胡.

7. Cf. Nos. 617-619.

8. Cf. No. 63.

9. Cf. Nos. 568, 572, 614, 620.

10. Cf. No. 569.

11. Cf. Nos. 563, 564.

and at the time of *Wang-Mang*, who had given to his dynasty the name of *Hsin*, the *Kuang-Hsin* 廣新 company "which makes mightier (the dynasty) of *Hsin*."¹ Lastly other companies appear to have been named after the place which they occupied. Thus the *Mei-Shui* 美水² company and the *Tang-ku* 當谷³ company may have taken their names respectively from the localities called *Mei-shui* and *Tang-ku*. The military stations received orders which issued probably from the Governor of the Command (*chun*): These orders had to be circulated in such a way that all the men might become acquainted with them⁴ and they had to be posted up in a prominent position in each *t'ing*.⁵

In close proximity to the Chinese garrisons there were the native tribes, and it was not always easy to maintain accord between these two elements.⁶ It was at any rate necessary for the Chinese to keep in constant touch with the native authorities 土吏, and this fact explains the frequent references in our slips to the local officials.⁷

As regards the Chinese officers, those who are mentioned most often are the captains 隊長⁸ commanding the companies, and next the *hou-chang* 候長⁹ who must have been in charge of the watch-towers, and the *hou-shih* 候史¹⁰ who were perhaps the subordinates of the *hou chang*. Mention is also made of the *tu-wei* 都尉, or military commandants. This title appears to have belonged in particular to the officer in charge of the famous Gate of Jade (*Yü mên kuan*).¹¹

The garrison troops consisted of both infantry and cavalry. Slips Nos. 279-283 and 286 expressly mention the cavalry and in several cases we are told whether a soldier travelled on foot (No. 145) or on horseback (Nos. 614, 662).

1. Cf. Nos. 596, 598, 599, 600.

2. Cf. No. 435..

3. Cf. No. 401.

4. Cf. Nos. 166, 258, 313, 536.

5. Cf. Nos. 63 (side B), 273, 432.

6. Cf. No. 433.

7. Cf. Nos. 49, 51, 138, 139, 143-145, 150, 375, 552, 681.

8. Cf. Nos. 42, 43, 45, 54, 56, 136, 157, 271, 377, 436, 463, 482, 484, 490, 562, 563, 564, 565, 568, 572, 596, 600, 604, 681.

9. Cf. Nos. 55, 58, 66, 80, 83, 168, 169, 314, 377, 390, 439, 471, 483, 487, 492, 536, 552, 553, 571, 592, 613, 617, 662.

10. Cf. Nos. 62, 66, 81, 190, 262, 405, 459, 460, 542, 552, 553,

11. Cf. Nos. 136, 137, 428, 451, 483 (?)

In addition to the men in the posts, there were apparently watch-dogs, which were officially recognized as belonging to the garrison and having the right to be fed. (No. 487).

IV

The first duty of the troops garrisoned in the advanced posts of the West was to mount guard, and in case of emergency to give the alarm by lighting a beacon. As soon as the nearest station saw the signal it repeated it, and by means of this form of optical telegraphy the news was transmitted from point to point, warning one by one all the little garrisons, which at once rushed to arms.¹ In one of our slips² an officer accuses himself of being to blame for not properly superintending the fire signals, and in another³ orders are given to a small garrison to refrain from lighting beacons in the future, because it is too far from the nearest post for its signals to be seen. Lastly, several slips⁴ show that the exact time at which a fire-signal appeared was carefully noted in writing.

The use of fire-signals was not invented by the *Han*; it existed long before their time. The following anecdote is told in the biography of *Wu-chi* 無忌, a lord of *Hsin-ling* 信陵君 who died in B.C. 243:—*Wu-chi* was in the middle of a game of draughts with the king of *Wei* 魏 when the news came from the North frontier, by fire-signals, that hostile bands from the district of *Chao* had appeared and threatened to invade the country.⁵ The king of *Wei* abandoned his game at once and wished to take immediate measures to drive back the invaders, but *Wu-chi* calmed him by saying that the king of *Chao* was out hunting, and that it was a mistake to imagine that his intentions were hostile.

Different words were used according to the material of which the beacons were made. They were called *fêng* 烽, if used by day to produce a cloud of smoke, and *sui* 燧, if by night to penetrate the darkness with a bright flame.⁶ *Ssü-ma Hsiang-ju* 司馬相如, who died in B.C. 117, wrote in one of his literary compositions:

1. Cf. No. 43^o.

2. Cf. No. 567. In No. 438 we again find the expression 督烽.

3. Cf. No. 552.

4. Cf. Nos. 84, 85, 86, 87.

5. "*Shih chi*," chap. LXXVII, p. 1. r^c: 北境傳舉烽言趙寇至且入界

6. One of our slips (No. 552), makes a clear distinction between the smoke-signals used by day and the flame-signals for use by night. We know that the same system was used under the Roman Empire: cf. Vegetius book III, chap. 5: "Si divisae sint copiae, per noctem flammis, per diem fumo, significant sociis, quod aliter non potest nuntiarı."

“When the soldiers in the frontier commands learned that the day or night beacons had been lit, every man seized his bow, put his horse to a gallop, girded on his arms and started off.”¹

The general *Ma Ch'êng* 馬成, who from A.D. 38 to 43 devoted his efforts to organizing the defence of the Northern frontier, built (along various lines, details of which history has handed down to us) “fortifications and organized fire-signals for use by both day and night. At every tenth *li* there was a watch-tower.”²

The precise sense of the two words *fêng* and *sui* is not always retained; and indeed the word *fêng* is used to designate the fire-signal whichever it may be.

The watch-towers on which the beacons were lit are called sometimes *hou* 候 as in the text quoted in note 3, sometimes *fêng-hou* 烽候 as in note 4, and sometimes simply *fêng* 烽. In the “*Life of Hsüan-Tsang*” we are told that the pilgrim, after making his way through the Pass of the Gate of Jade, had to journey by five watch-towers 烽 in succession, each occupied by sentries and each a hundred *li* distant from the next.³ This is evidently the sense of the word 烽 in our slip No. 61, which gives us the list of the five watch-towers in the *I-ho* area.

When watch was well kept, it enabled the inroads of the enemy to be effectively frustrated; moreover the *Ch'ien Han shu* tells us that at a certain time the *Hsiung-nu* gained very little success because “at this time the fire-signals and the vigilance were most efficient in the commands along the Han frontier.”⁴ On the other hand, at another time “the officers and lieutenants in the fortresses and watch-towers ordered their soldiers to hunt wild beasts so as to make a profit on the skins and flesh of these animals; thus the troops were worn out with fatigue and the fire-signals were neglected.”⁵

If the word 烽 designates the beacon or, by extension of its meaning, the tower at the summit of which the beacon was erected, the word 炬 was used to designate specially the flame which burst out when the beacon was lit. *T'ang liu tien*, “The six regulations

1. “*Shih chi*,” chap. CXVII, p. 11 r°: 夫邊郡之士聞烽舉燧燧皆攝弓而馳荷兵而走。

2. *Hou Han shu*, chap. III, p. 4 r° 皆築保壁起烽燧十里一候。

3. “*Life of Hsüan-tsang*” (*Trip. of Tokyo*, XXXII, 2, p. 2 v°) 關外西北又有五烽侯望者居之各相去百里

4. “*Ch'ien Han shu*,” chap. XCIV, a, p. 13 r°: 是時漢邊郡發火侯望精明。

5. “*Ch'ien Han shu*,” chap. XCVI, b, p. 5 v°: 障侯長吏使卒獵獸以皮肉爲利卒苦而燧火乏失。

of the *T'ang*," a work which is shown by its title to date from the seventh, eight, or ninth century A.D.¹ gives us this information in a passage quoted in "*P'ei wên yün fu*" (under the word 烽): 'The watch-towers were equidistant and at intervals of thirty *li*. When fire-signals were lit, the watchers made either one fire, or two in succession, or three, or four, according as the invaders were more, or less numerous."²

As the dictionary "*Shuo wên*" shows, the word 炬 was written 莛 at an earlier date, and it is in the latter form that it is reproduced in our slips where frequent record is made of the appearance of a fire signal.³

One slip⁴ makes it quite clear that the stake round which the beacon was built was thirty feet high, and this must have therefore been the height of the beacon itself.

Soldiers were sent out on fatigue to collect fire-wood for building and feeding the beacons, and as it was sometimes necessary to go a considerable distance this fatigue might well last as long as ten days.⁵

Whatever may have been the effectiveness of fire-signals, they proved insufficient in the event of fog, heavy rain, or snow. It was then necessary to fall back on swift messengers, who galloped continuously, finding a new horse at a relay-post every ten *li*. A short poem by *Wang Wei* 王維 (A.D. 699-759) recalls this picture.⁶

"Every ten *li* a new horse starts.

Every five *li* there is a stroke of the whip.⁷

A message from the Protector-General (*tu-hu*)⁸ has arrived,

1. (The "*T'ang liu tien*" was written in the second quarter of the VIIIth century. The passage quoted here is in the 5th chapter of the original work.—P. PELLIOT.)

2. 唐六典曰凡烽侯大率相去三十里其放烽有一炬二炬三炬四大炬以賊多少而爲差焉。

3. Cf. Nos. 84-87.

4. Cf. No. 694.

5. Cf. Nos. 555, 609 (?).

6. 十里一走馬五里一揚鞭都護軍書至匈奴圍酒泉關山正飛雪烽火斷無煙

(See "*Ch'üan T'ang shih*," lithographic ed., chap. V., p. I V°.)

7. Because, after galloping five *li*, the horse begins to show signs of weariness; it is necessary therefore to urge it on with the whip so that it continues at full speed. The horse is changed every ten *li*.

8. For the title "Protector-General," which was instituted in B.C. 60. cf. p. VII, lines 14-18.

Telling how the *Hsiung-nu* were besieging *Chiu-ch'üan*;¹
 But at that very time snow-flakes were falling on the moun-
 tain where stand the openings (of the wall),
 And the signals of fire could raise no smoke."

The men who were charged with the lighting of the fire-signals were responsible for keeping watch over the frontier. The act of exercising this vigilance is expressed by the words 候望.² When watch was kept in the area guarded by the great Wall, a soldier was said to "mount the Wall." The celebrated scholar *Ts'ai Yung* 蔡邕 was banished in A.D. 178, or shortly afterwards, to the neighbourhood of what is now *Shên-shui hsien* 神水 in Northern *Shan-hsi*; from there he addressed a request to the Emperor asking him to accept his historical work entitled "*Hou Han chi*" 後漢記. It opens with these words: "When I arrived at the place of my banishment, I mounted the Wall to take charge of the fire-signals; my duty was to keep watch."³ Our slips often give us the expression 候望.⁴

1. The Command of *Chiu-ch'üan* had its administrative headquarters in the town which is to-day *Su-chow fu* (*Kan-su* province).

2. Cf. p. IX, note 3.

3. Commentary on "*Hou Han shu*" (chap. XC, b. p. 8. v°): 臣既到徙所乘塞守烽職在候望

In "*Ch'ien Han shu*" (chap. XCIV, b. p. 4 r°) the commentator *Yen Shih-ku* says: "The expression *Ch'êng sai* signifies that a sentry mounts the wall and keeps watch." 乘塞登之而守也

4. Cf. Nos. 60, 189, 265, 432, 495, 623.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE "DOCUMENTS CHINOIS DÉCOUVERTS
par Aurel STEIN
dans les Sables du Turkestan Oriental"

by

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V.

The watching of the frontier was not the only task which devolved on the garrison troops. They were also charged with the ensuring of provisions for the Chinese ambassadors who visited from time to time the "Countries of the West." To do this it was necessary for them to have a constant supply of corn, and as the transport of cereals to such distant parts would have been impossible, it was necessary for them to cultivate fields themselves, the harvest of which provided them with the corn required. These garrison troops (戍卒) were therefore at the same time employed

on agricultural work (田卒 or 屯卒), and they established veritable military colonies.

It is shortly after the year B.C. 101 that we see the military colonies of the West mentioned for the first time: "In the region of *Lun-t'ai* and *Ch'ü-li*" (south-west of Karachar), says the "*Ch'ien Han shu*," "there were several hundreds of military colonists. An imperial commissioner was appointed there to take charge of (them) and to protect (their crops), thus supplying the needs of the ambassadors sent to foreign countries."¹

Our slips² tell us moreover of a Chinese Embassy at Yarkand about B.C. 95, which halted at one of the military stations west of *Tun-huang* and demanded rations for its personnel; the ambassador's suite consisted of eighty-seven persons, a number which agrees with what we learn elsewhere of the importance of these missions. We know that when Chang Ch'ien 張騫 started in B.C. 138 in quest of the *Yüeh-chih*, he had with him a hundred men.³

An imperial order has been preserved which deals with the founding of a military colony,⁴ and it contains interesting information. Although this colony was founded in the territory of *Tun-huang*, it was the governor of *Chiu-ch'üan* who was charged with the execution of the decrees. Indeed *Chiu-ch'üan* appears to have been the political centre of Chinese influence in the Western Marches at the time of the early *Han*.⁵ For the purpose of founding the colony two thousand soldiers were taken from the garrison already stationed in the "command" of *Tun-huang*, and then apparently a certain number were added from the "command" of *Chiu-ch'üan*.

These troops were ordered to move with a complete staff to the spot chosen for occupation and there to establish a colony. But it was the duty of the governor to examine in person the configuration of the ground in order to decide upon the most favorable site; he was recommended to profit by natural obstacles, and M. Stein's researches have shown how skilfully the Chinese were trained in the art of using the lie of the land or stretches of water for the strengthening of their strategic positions. Finally a rampart was built round the camp enabling the sentries

1. *Ch'ien Han shu* (chap. XCVI, a, p. 1 v'): 而輪臺渠翠皆有田卒數百人置使者校尉領護以給使外國者。

2. Cf. Nos. 310 and 311.

3. Cf. "*Sü-ma-Ch'ien*," chap. CXXIII, p. 1 v'.

4. Cf. No. 60.

5. Cf. p. V, note 5.

to see from a distance what was happening, and thus to prevent any surprise.

Several slips show the troops of the military colonies occupied in tilling the virgin soil called "the Celestial Fields," 天田, apparently because they were in the state in which nature gave them to mankind.¹ The work of tillage was very slow, and at times perhaps involved the transformation of the sands of the Desert² into arable land, but it must most often have been confined to a simple clearing of the brushwood. One man progressed on an average about three paces a day,³ though it is true that we do not know the width of the front on which he made this advance.

The crops seem to have consisted principally of wheat 麥,⁴ millet 粟,⁵ and rice 米;⁶ hemp was also cultivated,⁷ and elm-trees⁸ were planted, doubtless to give some shade and coolness near the dwellings.

VI.

In addition to their military duties and agriculture the soldiers in these colonies had other occupations. We often find them making bricks of unfired clay which were probably needed for the construction of defensive works. These bricks were not always of the same dimensions: for instance, whereas in Nos. 99-101 the daily task for each man is from sixty-five to seventy bricks, and in No. 673 eighty bricks, the number made reaches a hundred and fifty in Nos. 279, 281, 284 and 287. It is presumable that the bricks mentioned in the former documents took twice as long a time to make, and therefore were larger than those of the latter. When the bricks had been made, there followed days spent in removing them (No. 280) and piling them in stacks (No. 98).

If the factory was far from a military post, a squad of ten cavalrymen was sent to do the work, and in this case one of them was employed as cook and, if necessary, another as sentry. (Nos. 279-284).

1. Cf. p. 88-90, 265, 289, 290, 433, 495.

2. In point of fact, in the posts explored by M. Stein all regular cultivation must have been impossible as there was no water for irrigation.

3. Cf. Nos. 89 and 90.

4. Cf. Nos. 405, 484, 485, 486.

5. Cf. Nos. 292, 303, 310, 311, 328, 405, 415.

6. Cf. Nos. 162, 164, 165, 220, 441.

7. Cf. No. 96.

8. Cf. No. 302.

The military colonies were also used to repair or construct the buildings in which they lived. Numerous slips (Nos. 102-111) contain the calculation of wall-surfaces covered either with mud-plaster or by another process (*ma-fu* 馬夫) on which we are not well informed (Nos. 92, 104 ; 107, 393) (a).

Although use was made of donkeys and camels as beasts of burden, men themselves had at times to carry the raw materials or supplies which they required. The manner of reckoning the distances which they traversed is singular enough (Nos. 92-97). Instead of saying that in a certain squad each man has made so many times a definite journey of so many *li*, the first figure given is the total distance actually traversed,—which is obtained by adding up all the journeys made during so many days by so many men : then the total number of *li* is divided by the number of men, and if the figure will not divide exactly the remainder is given to the last man, each of the others being allotted the theoretical distance derived from the quotient.¹

Among the duties of the garrisons, we must also remember the postal services. Some of our slips² contain lists of letters handed to a courier and the name of the recipient in each case.

Often the soldier who served as messenger carried no letter and gave by word of mouth the orders or instructions, the transmission of which had been entrusted to him. All that he had to do was to present a slip which accredited him in the eyes of the person to whom he was sent, and this is the explanation of the numerous slips which announce a message without saying what it is,³ or merely bear a date and the name of a man.⁴

VII.

The men received by way of daily rations 6 *shêng* of corn,⁵ a *shêng* being the equivalent of the tenth of a bushel.

They were paid according to their length of service, and slip No. 592 is extremely interesting as it shows us how the calculations were made. They began by estimating the number of months

(a) (Since Prof. Chavannes wrote the present introduction, M. Wang Kouo-wei has shown that the embarrassing *ma-fu* 馬夫 we must read *ma-shih* 馬矢 which is known to be an old way of writing 馬屎 *ma-shih*, "horse-dung." P. Pelliot.)

1. See No. 92, where this remarkable process has been explained in detail.

2. Nos. 275, 367, 454, 455.

3. Cf. Nos. 56, 137, 138, 141, 143, 451.

4. Cf. Nos. 45 and 50.

5. Cf. Nos. 310, 311, 326, 328, 336.

and days which a soldier had served ; this number was then reduced to days on the supposition that each month consisted of 30 days ; but it was then necessary to make a subtraction, taking away as many days as there were months of 29 days in the period under consideration ; finally the number thus obtained was increased by adding half as much again, for it was the rule that in these distant posts two days' service should be the equivalent of three.

It was probably for the purpose of making calculations of this nature that a large number of slips contain a statement of the length of service of such and such a subaltern-officer.¹

We do not know whether the private soldiers were paid in money or in corn ; but in the case of a junior officer, a *hou-shih* 候史, or of the second in command of a watch-tower, we know that he was paid in money and received 20 "sapèques" a day (No. 62).

These troops were armed with swords and cross-bows. We have no special information about the swords and their actual form must be studied on the *Shan-tung* bas-reliefs. As to cross-bows, the strength of this weapon was estimated by the weight which had to be attached to it in order to bend it. Such weights were reckoned in *shih*, which represented 120 Chinese pounds. Our slips mention cross-bows the strength of which is 3,² 4,³ 5,⁴ and 6 *shih*.⁵ Sometimes the strength was merely nominal, and the weapon when old was less strong than when new : thus a cross-bow which originally had the strength of 6 *shih* is mentioned as now having that of only 4, *shih*, i.e., 68 pounds.⁶ No mention is made of ordinary bows in our slips except in two cases,⁷ where the passages refer to barbarians. This seems to prove that the garrison troops in the time of the Han were armed with cross-bows and not with bows. Therefore in all probability the strings of hemp or silk which are mentioned in our slips⁸ were intended for cross-bows. The arrows must also have been arrows for cross-bows. They were of two kinds, *mêng* 萌矢 arrows⁹ and *kao* 藁矢 arrows ;¹⁰ either type could

1. Cf. Nos. 46, 394, 601, 642.
2. Cf. Nos. 73 and 113.
3. Cf. No. 74.
4. Cf. Nos. 64 and 114.
5. Cf. 676, 682, 703 and 705.
6. Cf. No. 554.
7. Cf. Nos. 172 and 548.
8. Cf. Nos. 38, 65, 116 (where cross-bow should be read instead of bow).
9. Cf. Nos. 38, 71, 134, 253, 498, 682 and 693.
10. Cf. Nos. 125, 126 and 266.

have been fitted with the bronze tips¹ of which M. Stein himself was able to collect many specimens.² The arrows were kept in quivers.³ When they were being issued to the troops or being handed into store, great care was taken to note exactly their actual condition, and those which were damaged were separated from those which were intact.⁴

As defensive weapons, mention is made of shields⁵ and leather breast-plates.⁶ The strictest accounts were kept of all these military supplies, and the date on which a weapon was repaired was always written down.⁷ Also, the list of arms issued to a post or rendered unfit for further service⁸ was constantly checked.

A soldier's equipment included all his clothing⁹ and his shoes.¹⁰

It was not however for rough clothing that the strips of silk, specimens of which have been found by M. Stein, were used.¹¹ Whether they were used for the uniform of senior officers¹² or formed part of the merchandise carried by the caravans, the fragment of silk which has been preserved¹³ is of great importance. It so happens that this piece is the border of a strip (i.e., the border of the outside length of the roll), and on it are written in ink several essential details: the material was 2 feet 2 inches wide, 40 feet long, and weighed about 25 ounces; it was worth 618 pieces of money, and had been manufactured in the district of *Shan-tung* province where the town of *Chi-ning chou* now stands. We can thus establish the origin, price, weight, and dimensions of the silk which formed the chief article exported from China at the time of the writings of Ptolemy.

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1. Cf. Nos. 125, 126, 266, 267, 498, 587 and 693.
 2. "*Ruins of Desert Cathay*," Vol. I, p. 366; Vol. II, pp. 65 and 127.
 3. Cf. Nos. 71, 187, 393 and 682.
 4. Cf. Nos. 71, 682, 693 and 703.
 5. Cf. Nos. 39, 40, 75, 77 and 682.
 6. Cf. Nos. 187, 393 and 569.
 7. Cf. Nos. 39, 40 and 41.
 8. Cf. Nos. 184, 257, 274 and 307.
 9. Cf. Nos. 42, 43, 72, 79, 351 and 383.
 10. Cf. No. 569.
 11. "*Ruins of Desert Cathay*," Vol. I, p. 381; Vol. II, pp. 125-126.
 12. Cf. No. 490.
 13. Cf. No. 539.

VIII.

As may well be imagined, the intellectual life in these little military colonies isolated in the middle of the Desert cannot have been considerable. Books were naturally not very numerous. Those of which we possess some fragments are of three kinds: some are treatises on divination, others collections of medical prescriptions, and the remainder are vocabularies.

The treatises on divination are represented by two slips. One of them¹ shows us how to prognosticate the future of a child by the pose of his head at the time of birth. The second of these documents² is more interesting, for it refers obviously to the *I-ching* cycle. Although it is not drawn from the actual text of this classic, it is based like the latter on the examination of hexagonal figures, and it proves that speculations on hexagrams were customary among fortune-tellers.

The medical prescriptions³ are written on thin bamboo slips which are all of the same dimensions, and must in consequence have formed one collection. It does not, however, appear that these directions for use in cases of men or animals actually constituted a book; they were rather a series of formulae which must have been collected by a doctor—either because he had had to prescribe them for certain cases, or because he wished to record them for his own future use. Slip No. 395 may also be a fragment of a medical treatise, but the text is too short for us to understand what was the subject under discussion.

The vocabularies seem to have been of various kinds. In addition to the three slips⁴ which, though they belong to this category, we cannot definitely assign to any known work, we possess quite a large number of fragments⁵ of a small book which is very famous in China, the "*Chi Chiu chang*" 急就章. I have tried, when speaking of them,⁶ to show the importance of the part played by this book in primary schools in the time of the Eastern Han. The popularity of this treatise is confirmed by the very fact that it was distributed even among the most distant outposts of the Empire, and the fragments of this work discovered by M. Stein are the most ancient manuscripts of a Chinese book

1. Cf. No. 448.

2. Cf. Nos. 59, 638.

3. Nos. 524-534.

4. Nos. 397, 603 (?), 671.

5. Nos. 1-7.

6. Cf. pp. 2-3.

in our possession. They will without doubt be esteemed of very great value by the scholars who have already devoted their time to numerous commentaries on the text of the "*Chi Chiu Chang*." Slip No. 8 affords an interesting problem, for it would lead us to suppose that the author of the "*Chi chiu chang*" originated a school, and that he had disciples who continued his work, claiming him as their Master.^{1a}

It would have been interesting if it had been also possible to discover in the sands of the Desert some lines of the "Biographies of famous Women" (*Lieh nü chuan* 列女傳) which *Liu Hsiang* 劉向 wrote at the end of the first century B.C.^{1b} It may well be that this book found its way as far as the wild regions of the extreme west, for its title has survived in one slip (No. 622).^{1c}

Lastly, although they cannot exactly be called books, I must mention, among the discoveries of M. Stein, a most curious multiplication table (No. 702) and several fragments of calendars. The latter documents enable us to establish without any doubt the calendar for the years B.C. 63,² B.C. 59,³ B.C. 57,⁴ B.C. 39,⁵ A.D. 94,⁶ A.D. 153,⁷ and we have thus complete evidence to confirm the strict accuracy of the calculations made by the Chinese chronologist *Wang Yüeh-chêng* 汪日楨.⁸ In one

1a. (Since Prof. Chavannes' publication, Mr. Lo Chên-yü, in his excellent book "*Liu sha chui chien*" 流沙墜簡, i° 1-2, has shown that Chavannes' slip No. 8, as well as Nos. 397, 693 and 671, belonged to a lost lexicographical work called 倉頡篇 "*Ts'ang hsieh p'ien*." The "*Ts'ang hieh p'ien*" and its supplements were arranged in sentences of 4 characters, while each sentence of the "*Chi chiu chang*" had 7 characters; both works were rhymed.—P.P.)

1b. (The French text says "first century A.D.," which is only a slip.—P.P.)

1c. (Mr. Lo Chen-yü has recognized, in slips Nos. 425 and 457, fragments of a lost treatise, half-military and half-divinatory, called *Li mo* 力墨 or *Li mu* 力牧; cf. also Sir A. Stein, *Serindia*, p. 764. More recent than the latter's wooden slips, but older than the oldest documents recovered from the *Ch'ien-fo-tung* of *Tun-huang* is the scrap of paper on which is written a fragment of the "*Chan kuo ts'ê*" 戰國策; which was brought back from *Lou-lan* by Mr. Sven Hedin and is now published in A. Conrady's "*Die Chines. Handschriften und sonstigen Kleinfunde Sven Hedins in Lou-lan*," Stockholm, 1920, in—4, p. 76, 77.—P.P.)

2. Nos. 9-24.

3. Nos. 25-35.

4. No. 36.

5. No. 429.

6. No. 537.

7. No. 680.

8. As is well known, Father *Huang* made use of the works of *Wang Yüeh-chêng* to write his "Concordance des chronologies néoméniques chinoise et européenne."

case only,¹ viz., the year B.C. 96, our slips oblige us to make a correction in his reckonings. There still remain, however, certain obscurities in the nature of the ancient calendars: for example, we have not yet succeeded in determining what were the "fixed points" distributed at intervals of twelve days or thirteen days throughout the year.²

IX.

This sketch of the life of Chinese garrisons in the west about the time of the Christian era would not be complete without an attempt to conjecture what were the thoughts and feelings of the soldiers exiled thus in a distant land. Chinese poetry enables us to form some idea of their outlook. But it is not the literature of the *Han* period which provides us with the material required—it is almost silent on this subject. The sources from which we can draw our information are the writers of more recent times—particularly those who adorned the *T'ang* dynasty.

The famous poet *Li po* 李白 (705-762)³ has told of the sadness that filled the heart of the soldiers when at night the wind, which had crossed the whole Desert in its wild career, passed moaning through the Gate of Jade, and the moonlight revealed to the sentry mounted on the watch-tower the horror of the surrounding wilderness.

MOONLIGHT ON THE MOUNTAINS OF THE PASS.³

Bright is the moon as she rises above the Celestial Mountains:
She shines fitfully amid a sea of clouds.

The wind that has traversed long distances of many thousand
li

Sweeps through the Pass of the Gate of Jade.

When the *Han* have gone down into the region of *Po-têng*,⁴

1. Nos. 304 and 308.

2. See p. 14, line 4 et seq.

a (Prof. Chavannes took the dates 705-762 from Prof. Giles' *Biogr. Dictionary*, No. 1181; but 705 for the year of Li Po's birth is without authority. The true dates are most probably 701-762.—P.P.)

3. See "*T'ang shih san po shou chu shu*" 唐詩三百首注疏 (edition 1835), chap. 1, p. 29 r°—v°, the poem entitled "關山月."

4. *Po-têng* is the name of the place where in B.C. 200 the Emperor *Kao-tsu*, surrounded by the *shan-yü* of the *Hsiung-nu*, found himself in great danger.

When the *HU* have espied them by the bays of the Blue Lake
(*Kuku-nor*),¹

From the places where the battles have been fought
Never once has a man been seen to return.
The soldiers exiled to keep watch in that distant land
Gaze afar on the prospect of the marches :
As they think of their own country,
The face of many of them is one of suffering :
On the high watch-tower, on such a night as this
Their sighs know not how to cease.

明月出天山。蒼茫雲海間。長風幾萬里。吹度玉門關。
漢下白登道。胡窺青海灣。由來征戰地。不見有人還。
戍客望邊色。思歸多苦顏。高樓當此夜。嘆息未應閑。

As long as the men are young and strong they endure without much complaint the rough life that is theirs, but gradually they weary of the dangers and discomforts. Look at the veteran who passes on his rawbced mount with one possession in the world, his sword.²

Over the boundary rises the dust of the barbarian land.³
Throughout a succession of many years he has journeyed
beyond *Wu-wei*,⁴

In life and in death his good sword ever bears him company.
At the cost of many troubles he makes his way towards *Kin-wei*⁵

A man who has for a long time kept watch under the open sky grows weary and weak⁶

His horse that has made journeys far from home has lost his fair form.

Comes now the news again that the city of *Chiu-ch'uan*⁷
Has been beleaguered by the serried ranks of the enemy.

1. The historical allusion here is less clear. The reference may be to the expedition directed in A.D. 576 against the tribe of the *T'u-yü-hun* who lived on the edge of the *Kuku-nor*, but it is also possible that the poet did not intend to be so precise in this instance.

2. A poem by *Kuo Chên* 郭震 (656-713), quoted in "*Ku shih hsüan*" 古詩選 by *Wang Shih-chêng* 王士禛, section III, chap. I, p. 10 v°.

3. The dust rises because troops are moving, and fighting is taking place.

4. *Lan-chou fu*, in *Kan-su*.

5. *Kin-wei* belongs to nomenclature of the *T'ang* and signifies a locality in Mongolia, in the country of the *Khalkhas*.

6. For this meaning of the word 老, cf. *B.E.F.E.O.*, t. III, p. 417, n.7.

7. *Su-chou fu*, in *Kan-su*.

塞上虜塵飛。頻年出武威。死生隨玉劍。辛苦向金徽。
久戍人將老。長征馬不肥。仍聞酒泉郡。已合數重圍。

After scouring on horse-back the Mongolian steppes and beyond the Mountains of Pamir, the imperial troops will meet their death on some distant battle field, and vile crows will dispute their entrails, only to leave them hanging on the branches of a dead tree.¹

Fighting South of the Wall.

Last year we fought by the source of the River *Sang-kan*,²
 This year we are fighting among the mountains *Ts'ung-ling*³
 and by the great River ;
 We have dipped our swords in the waves by the shore of the
 sea *T'iao-chih*,⁴
 We have loosed our steeds in the grass that grows amid the
 snow of the *Tien-shan*.⁵
 Ten thousand *li* away we have fought in distant expeditions,
 And the three armies⁶ are utterly exhausted.
 The *Hsiung-nu* labour at slaughter in their fields ;
 From time immemorial nought can be seen but white bones
 on the plains of yellow sand.
 The House of *Ch'in* built the great Wall to defend itself
 against the Land of the *Hu* ;
 The House of *Han* in its turn made use of beacon fires for
 signals ;
 The signals of beacon fires have not ceased ;
 The expeditions and the battles know not an end.
 In battle on the plain forlorn men die in conflict hand to hand.
 The charger of the vanquished lifts a piteous neighing to the
 sky,
 The crows and kites dig among the human entrails with their
 beaks ;
 They fly away with them and hang them on the branches
 of dead trees.
 The soldiers have dyed the grass and bushes with their blood :
 The general won not the victory.
 The world will understand that weapons of war are indeed
 instruments of death,

1. A poem by *Li Po* 李白 quoted in *Ku-shih hsüan* by *Wang Shih-chêng*, section II, chap. 4, p. 18 v^o.

2. North of *Shan-si*.

3. The Pamir Mountains.

4. The Persian Gulf.

5. The Celestial Mountains.

6. The Imperial armies.

And that the wise man has not recourse to them when he can do otherwise.¹

去年戰桑乾源。今年戰蔥河道。洗兵條支海上波。放馬天山雪中草。萬里長征戰。三軍盡衰老。淘奴以殺戮爲耕作。古來未見白骨黃沙田。秦家築城備胡虜。漢家遠有烽火燃。烽火燃不息。征戰無已時。野戰格鬪死。敗馬號鳴向天悲。烏鴛啄人腸。銜飛上掛枯樹枝。士卒塗草莽。將軍空爾爲。乃知兵者是凶器。聖人不得已而用之。

How are they to learn in China that those who lie on the bare plain are dead? For a long time the women-folk will continue to see in their dreams the likeness of those whom they love, but they do not know that those who—clad in warm clothing to face the rigours of the Mongolian winter—left but lately full of hope and resolved to bring back victory, are now nothing but dry bones scattered along the banks of some barbarian river:²

They have sworn to sweep the *Hsiung-nu* without taking thought of their own lives:

Five thousand men clad in sable coats lie dead in the dust of the *Hu*.

Alas, the bones scattered along the banks of the River *Wu-ting*³

Are still men who appear to their lovers in their dreams!

誓掃匈奴不顧身。五千貂錦喪胡塵。

可憐無定河邊骨。猶是春閨夢裏人。

Those who have the good fortune to return to their country have often reached extreme old age, and on their return not a single familiar voice gives them welcome. It is to the tombs that they turn to find partners in the unhappy meal which they have prepared in their ruined homes⁴ :—

When fifteen years of age, I left for the wars ;
In my eightieth year was I able to return home.
On the road I met folk of my country,

1. The last two lines are a quotation from the "*Liu t'ao*," and at the same time of §31 of the "*Tao t'eh chung*."—P.P.]

2. A poem by *Ch'ên T'ao* 陳陶 (early tenth century). See "*T'ang shih san po shou chu shu*," chap. VI, b, p. 20 v°-21r°.

3. The river *Wu-ting* is a small tributary on the right bank of the *Huang-ho*; it flows sixty *li* east of the sub-prefecture of *Ch'ing-chien* 清澗 in the north of *Shan-hsi*.

4. An anonymous poem of the *Han* period. See "*Ku shih shang hsi*" 古詩賞析 published by *Chang Yü-ku* 張玉穀 in 1772 (republished in 1887), chap. IV, p.11 v°.

(And I asked them) who dwelt in my house.

"Look yonder," (they said); "that is your house,
Yonder where stand cypresses and tombs in great number."

A hare entered by the hole made for the dogs;

A pheasant flew away from the roof-top¹;

In the court-yard within wheat was growing wild;

Wild mallows had sprung up beside the well-heads.

I boiled the wheat to make me a platter;

I gathered the mallows to make me some soup:

Both the soup and the wheat were ready cooked at the same
time,

But I knew not to whom I might offer them.

Thereupon I went forth from the house and looked toward
the East²:

My tears fell fast and watered my raiment.

十五從軍征。八十始得歸。道逢鄉里人。家中有阿誰。
遙望是君家。松柏冢纍纍。兔從狗竇入。雉從梁上飛。
中庭生旅穀。井上生旅葵。烹穀持作飯。采葵持作羹。
羹飯一時熟。不知貽阿誰。出門東向望。淚落沾我衣。

It would have been better, if old-age had not come, to continue fighting against the inaccessible Nomads of the North, but the conditions of the campaign are hard in the country beyond the great Wall. The unfriendly nature of the ground makes common cause with the enemy, and the bitter winter increases the difficulty of the midnight marches:³

If the moon is overcast and the wild geese fly high,

It is because the *shan-yü* takes to flight during the night:⁴

The Chinese general is bent on taking swift horsemen to
pursue them;

Heavy snow covers their bows and their swords.

月黑雁高飛。單于夜遁逃。欲將輕騎逐。大雪滿弓刀。

Yet it is not the battle that the soldier dreads the most; he fears far more the tasks under which men laboured to extend the

1. These two lines signify that the house is entirely derelict.

2. In the direction of the tombs.

3. A poem by *Lu Lun* 盧綸, called *Yün-yen* 允言, who was in his prime of life in the *ta-li* period (776-779). See "*T'ang shih san po shou chu shu*," chap. VI, a, p. 4 r°.

4. The *shan-yü*, i.e., the king of the *Hsüung-nu*, menaced by a Chinese army, strikes camp during the night. His departure is signalled by the dust which rises and obscures the moon, and by the wild geese which fly up in alarm. The Chinese general is determined to hurl himself in pursuit of the fugitives in spite of the darkness and the snow.

long Wall, built by *Ch'in Shih huang ti*, like a dyke set up to withstand the encroaching waves of robber tribes. A poem of the time of the three kingdoms gives us, in the form of a dialogue, the complaints of those engaged on this accursed work :¹

The horses are watered in the holes² along the great Wall ;
The water is so cold that it chills the horses right to the bone.³

(The soldier working at his task) will say to the officer in charge of the building of the great Wall :

“ Look to it that ye keep not here the soldiers of *T'ai-yuan*.”⁴
The officer answers : “ For the works of the government there are fixed rules,⁵

Begone to your building and join the others in their rhythmic song.”⁶

“ Better were it ” (replies the soldier), “ for a man to die fighting hand-to-hand.

How shall we endure to be weighed down with sorrow as we build the great Wall ? ”

Ah, how the great Wall marches on without end !

It marches on without end upon its journey of three thousand *li*.

In the frontier cities there are many stalwart young men ;
In the dwellings of the heart of China there are many women forlorn.⁷

(The husband) writes a letter to be sent to his home in the heart (of China) ;

1. A poem by *Ch'en Lin* 陳琳, called *K'ung-chang*, 孔璋 (early third century A.D.). See “ *Ku shih shang hsi*,” chap. IX, pp. 16 v^o-17 r^o.

2. It is difficult to know exactly what the author means by the word 窟, which signifies not a moat, but a hole or cavity : perhaps the holes are those dug to provide the earth required for the construction of the Wall ; they would have served later to collect rain-water. The title, “ Watering horses in the holes along the great Wall,” is common to several poems, the earliest of which appears to be that of *Ts'ai Yung* 蔡邕 (133-192). See “ *Ku shih shang hsi*,” chap. VI, p. 10 r^o-v^o.

3. The first two lines show the rigour of the climate and serve as an introduction to the idea that the men employed on the building of the Wall would fain return to their own country.

4. It was in the district of *T'ai-yuan* in *Shan-hsi* that many of the men employed on the building of the Great Wall were recruited. The soldier who speaks is a native of *T'ai-yuan*.

5. The officer replies that it is not in his power to shorten the period of service.

6. The rhythmical song by which the workmen keep in time.

7. In these four lines the poet shows the immensurability of the great wall, and makes his reader see the evils caused by this gigantic undertaking in separating husbands from their wives.

“Marry another” (he writes): “bide not waiting for me,¹
Take good care of your new Master’s parents²
And think sometimes of me, your first love.”

The answer comes back to the frontier post:

“My lord,” (says the wife), “what sorry word have you uttered?”

You have spoken thus because you are in misfortune and trouble.

By what right can a man detain thus another’s children?

If a woman brings a son to the light, let her beware of raising him to manhood;

If she brings to the light a daughter, then let her nourish her with dried meats.³

See you not, my lord, at the foot of the great Wall

The heaps of dead men’s bones that lie there in mixed confusion?

Since the day when we plaited our hair together and I became your servant,⁴

I have ever been content in thought and feeling.⁵

I know well the sufferings you endure on the frontier;

How can your humble servant brook this life for long?”

飲馬長城窟。水寒傷馬骨。往謂長城吏。慎莫稽留太原卒。官作自有程。舉築諸汝聲。男兒事當格鬥死。何能拂爵築長城。長城何連連。連連三千里。邊城多健少。內舍多寡婦。作書與內舍。便嫁莫留住。善侍新姑嫜。時時念我故夫子。報書往邊地。君今出語一何鄙。身在禍難中。何爲稽留他家子。生男慎莫舉。生女哺用脯。君獨不見長城下。死人骸骨相撐拄。結髮行事君。慊慊心意問。明知邊地苦。賤妾何能久自全。

1. He renounces all hope of ever returning to his own country.

2. This expression implies that the husband thinks with emotion of his own parents, who will be deprived of the services of their daughter-in-law when she marries a second husband.

3. If a woman brings a daughter into the world the child must be nourished with the best possible food; if the child be a boy it is not worth while bringing him up, for sons are destined, if they grow to manhood, to strew their bones at the foot of the great Wall.

4. i.e., since we were married.

5. She has always been happy with her husband.

If the man torn from his home in the central provinces of China is to be pitied, perhaps those who dwell in the frontier-districts deserve even greater pity, for here not only the man but also all his family are the victims of the recruiting-sergeant, whose coming brings ruin to the home. This is the theme which *Tso Yen-nien* elaborated in a most striking manner at the beginning of the third century A.D.¹ :—

He is full of misfortune who dwells on the frontier :
Three times in one year has he been forced to join the army.
Three of his sons have gone to *Tun-huang*,
The two others were sent to *Lung-hsi*.

Whereas his five sons have left thus for the distant wars,
Their five wives will soon be mothers. 苦哉邊地人。一歲
三從軍。三子到燉煌。二子詣隴西。五子遠鬪去。五婦
皆懷身。

It has been necessary to call attention to these complaints in order that the documents discovered by M. Stein may be given their full significance. The historian who finds traces of the bold policy of the *Han* in central Asia must not forget that all their greatness was built with human materials. Just as the Chinese poets fancy that they still hear the distressed souls of those who built the great Wall of *Ch'in shih huang ti* wandering along its site, so we can reclaim from the administrative details of the life of a small Chinese garrison, isolated in the middle of the Desert, the sufferings and sorrows of the exiles who lament their lot.

1. Cf. "*Ku shih shang hsi*," chap. X, p. 8 r°.