
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
A. STEIN

敦煌考古記
唐代中國人帕米爾探險記

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NOTES ON ANCIENT CHINESE DOCUMENTS,
DISCOVERED ALONG THE HAN FRONTIER WALL
IN THE DESERT OF TUN-HUANG

BY

SIR AUREL STEIN, K.C.I.E.,
INDIAN ARCHÆOLOGICAL SURVEY.

In my *Ruins of Desert Cathay* * I had given a general account of the discoveries made by me in 1907 along the long-forgotten westernmost portion of that ancient frontier wall, a true *Limes*, which the great Han Emperor Wu-ti had constructed towards the end of the second century B.C. in order to guard his newly opened line for China's commercial and political expansion towards Central Asia. Subsequently in *Serindia*, the detailed Report on my second Central-Asian expedition (1906-8)†, which has now been completed in print at the Oxford University Press

* See *Ruins of Desert Cathay, Personal Narrative of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China* (two vols., 8vo, Macmillan & Co., London, 1912), i. pp. 540 sqq; ii. 30-158.

† *Serindia, Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China, carried out and described under the orders of H.M. Indian Government by Sir Aurel Stein.* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1921, royal quarto, Vols. I-III: Text, Vol. IV: 175 Plates, Vol. V: 95 Maps from original surveys).

For the explorations effected along the Tun-huang *Limes*, see *Serindia* (vol. ii), p. 566-730.

and will be published early in 1921, I have had occasion fully to describe the explorations, extending over two months and a half, which enabled me to trace the line of the ancient wall for a total length of over 140 miles and to search the ruins of its watch-towers and stations, including the famous 'Jade Gate.'

Having remained undisturbed by the hand of man in the solitude of the gravel desert, they yielded a rich harvest of early Chinese and other records, mainly on wood, along with many interesting relics of the life led along this most desolate of borders during the century immediately preceding and following the time of Christ.

The unsurpassed learning and critical acumen of my lamented great collaborator, M. Édouard Chavannes, had since 1913 rendered the mass of Chinese documents recovered here accessible to research also by non-sinologue students like myself.* It thus became possible for me to discuss in Chapter XX of *Serindia* the general organization of the *Limes* in the light of the historical and archæological information furnished by them, and to bring into correct focus the significance of the antiquarian facts revealed by actual exploration of its remains.

In the extracts from section vi of that chapter, communicated here with the kind permission of the Secretary to the Delegates of the Clarendon Press, no attempt can be made to set forth the manifold points of historical and archæological interest presented by the hundreds of official or quasi-official communications and records, all on wood, which were discovered at the ruined stations of the *Limes* and chiefly among their refuse-heaps. For those points, reference to the masterly summary furnished by the Introduction of M. Chavannes' work must suffice here.† But in the interest of those students in the Far East to whom the volumes of *Serindia* may remain difficult of access it has appeared useful to reproduce here the essential facts concerning the records of a personal and literary character to be found among those relics of Han times and in particular to indicate what light those relics as a whole throw upon the technicalities of the ancient stationery of China as used before the invention of paper by Ts'ai Lun in A.D. 105. ‡

* See Chavannes, *Les documents chinois découverts par Aurel Stein* (Oxford University Press, 1913), pp. 1-154, Plates I-XX.

† See Chavannes, *Les documents chinois*, pp. vii. sqq.

‡ For the information previously available from Chinese textual sources about the use of bamboo or wood as writing material, cf. M. Chavannes' *Les livres chinois avant l'invention du papier*, *Journal Asiatique*, janvier-février, 1905 (reprint), pp. 13-47.

As regards the 'stationery' aspect of the office records which form the vast majority of the documents recovered, such as administrative orders, reports, account statements, etc., my remarks may be brief; for in their material and shape they agree very closely with the Chinese records on wood first brought to light by me in the course of my excavations of 1901 at the Niya Site, an ancient settlement of the Tarim Basin abandoned to the desert sands in the 3rd century A.D.* As the specimens reproduced in *Ancient Khotan*, the detailed report on my first Central-Asian expedition,† in M. Chavannes' *Documents chinois*, Planches II-XX, and also in *Desert Cathay* show, these office records present themselves mostly as narrow slips of wood, from nine inches to nine and a half in length (roughly corresponding to the Chinese foot of the Han period) and from a quarter to a half of an inch in width. They may be inscribed on both sides, but ordinarily show only a single column of *tzü* 字 on either.

That bamboo 'slips' are relatively rare is a fact easily accounted for by the great distance separating that westernmost border of China Proper from the bamboo-growing regions of the Empire. In most of the slips the wood used is that of the cultivated poplar (*Populus alba*), as common now in the oases of northwestern Kan-su as it is in those of Chinese Turkestan, or else that of the wild poplar (the Turkestan *toghrak*) or the tamarisk. The latter two are still plentiful in the narrow belts of vegetation fringing the marshy depressions along which great portions of the *Limes* in the desert north and west of Tun-huang were constructed. But there are to be found also slips made of the wood of some conifer. This wood, probably brought from the forests of the Central Nan-shan, is found frequently in narrow tablets bearing more than one vertical line of characters on either or both faces. Otherwise these tablets conform in length and also in character of contents to the usual 'slips' described above.

I may add here in passing that owing to the traditional tenacity of Chinese convention the 'slip' form of the ancient wooden stationery used during the centuries preceding the invention of paper appears to be reflected in the arrangement of the pink coloured letter paper which ordinarily served for private correspondence in the pre-revolution China of our own times and widely continues in use still. The height of the vertical ruled lines on it and the distance between them cor-

* See Stein, *Ancient Khotan* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1907), i. pp. 342 sq., 539 sq.

† See *Ancient Khotan*, ii. Plates CXII, CXIV.

respond exactly to the average length and width of those ancient slips, each being meant to hold a single column of *tsü*.

Wooden slips of greater length up to 14 inches, form the stationery used for the numerous portions of calendars which turned up among the 'waste papers' (to use an anachronism) thrown on the refuse heaps of the ancient *Limes* stations. Such calendars were obviously needed in order to enable the clerical establishments to date reports, etc., correctly, to make out accounts, and so on. Usually these portions of calendars show in order the cyclic designations, arranged according to the sixty-years cycle, which a particular day bears in the successive twelve months of the year. This system has enabled M. Chavannes to fix in many cases the exact year intended, and in this way to restore complete calendars with absolute precision for the years 63, 59, 39 B.C. and A.D. 94, 153.* The result of his painstaking calculations affords valuable help for the verification of the tables prepared by Chinese chronologists. In this connexion it is of some interest to observe that an otherwise exactly-dated document, No. 255, of May 10th, 68 B.C., bears an erroneous *nien-hao*. The year is shown as the sixth of the *Pên-shih* 本始 period, which in reality had been replaced in 69 B.C. by the *Ti-chieh* 地節 period. This inaccuracy clearly points, as M. Chavannes observes, to the fact that the communications between the capital and the extreme western border were interrupted at the time.†

By the side of the official communications and records, private letters figure in considerable numbers among the writer remains from the *Limes*.‡ Most of them are too short or fragmentary to yield information bearing on the life of the border or to be otherwise of antiquarian interest. But special mention is due to two letters on silk, one long and well-preserved, T.XIII. i. 003 (*Documents*, Plate XX),§ which were found sewn up into a small bag for holding some medicine or condiment—luckily with the written surface turned inside. They were both addressed by an officer of superior rank stationed at Ch'êng-lo

* Cf. Chavannes' *Documents*, pp. xvii, 14.

† Cf. *Documents*, p. 61. For similar cases of dates given in elapsed *nien-haos*, see *Ancient Khotan*, i., p. 275, note. M. Chavannes' remarks, *ibid.*, pp. 533, sqq., make it quite certain that the erroneous *nien-haos* named in the Dandan-oilik documents of A.D. 781-7 were due to the isolation of Eastern Turkestan from the Empire through the Tibetan occupation of westernmost Kan-su in A.D. 781.

‡ See *Documents*, Nos. 151-4, 174, 178, 180, 243, 254, 344-6, 348, 349, 398, 398a, 419, 468, 489, 501-2, 573, 607, 629, 706-7 (the last two on paper).

§ See *Documents*, Nos. 398, 398a.

on the northern border of Shan-hsi to another exile on the Tun-huang *Limes*, the long one being intended to serve as a letter of recommendation for a colleague transferred to a post on the latter. Amidst much polite verbiage it also expresses the writer's disappointment at not having, after five years' service 'on the northern frontier, in a miserable country,' attained the desired charge of a command, for which he appears to have repeatedly petitioned the Emperor. In two other letters also we find the writers lamenting the hardship of the guard service on the frontier and the inclement season of spring.* The latter complaint bears a local touch which I can fully appreciate after my two spring campaigns of 1908 and 1914 on the desert border; it shows that the amenities of its climate were two thousand years ago much the same as now.

Of interest for the study of the ancient stationery is the small silk envelope, *Documents*, No. 503, T.xv.a.ii. 4 (Plate XIV) used for a private letter, as its address shows. Its inside width is 65 mm. This would conveniently admit of the insertion of a letter on silk, such as *Documents*, No. 398 (Plate XX), which is 58 mm. wide, after folding. As the refuse-heap where the envelope was found contained documents with dates ranging from A.D. 15 to 56, it appears to me very probable that the envelope, too, belongs approximately to the first half of the first century A.D., and thus to the period preceding the invention of paper.

We may now cast a glance at the fragments of literature, as M. Chavannes' analysis has revealed them, among the written relics of the *Limes*. Considering the conditions of the life led by those who guarded the line of small posts flung out into the desert, we cannot feel surprised at the scantiness of the traces which have survived of their intellectual occupations. For all that concerns the philological interest of these literary relics reference to M. Chavannes' full explanations will suffice here.† Of particular value among them are the relatively numerous fragments of a famous lexicographical text, the *Chi chiu chang* 急就章, which was composed in 48-33 B.C. and played an important part in the primary education of China during the Later Han period.‡

* See *Documents*, Nos. 344, 345.

† Cf. *Documents*, pp. viii, xvi sq., pp. 1 sqq. on Nos. 1-8.

‡ Cf. Chavannes, *Documents*, pp. 1-3. It is from *Chi chiu chang* that the script, commonly known in China as *chang ts'ao* 章草 and illustrated by most of the *Limes* documents, took its name; see Chavannes, *Documents*, p. viii.

These fragments, as M. Chavannes duly emphasizes, are the oldest known manuscripts which exist of a Chinese book, and it is fortunate that we have among them one containing the first paragraph of the work complete. The long prismatic tablet which bears this portion of the text on its three faces, *Doc. No. 1* (Plate 1), also has a special antiquarian interest as being a perfectly preserved specimen of a type of wooden stationery which is referred to in early Chinese texts and apparently was favoured for literary use.*

The popularity which *Chi chiu chang* soon acquired in the elementary teaching of Chinese writing sufficiently explains its rapid spread to the extreme north-west end of the border; for, among several ruined watchposts, fragments of it were found at T. VI. c (*Doc. No. 4*), a post early abandoned. In these, as in some other fragments which are of the usual slip form, the text appears to have been copied out as a writing exercise.† The importance which the Chinese have at all times attached to good handwriting is well known, and so also the necessity of constant practice which the very system of Chinese writing implies. This fact fully accounts not merely for the presence of these 'copy slips' from the *Chi chiu chang*, but for the abundant finds made also of other writing exercises.‡ Nothing could illustrate better the trouble which some of the men stationed at the outlying posts must have taken to 'improve their education,' or at least their handwriting, than the big packets of 'shavings' inscribed in this fashion which came to light on clearing the refuse-heaps of T. VI. b, a sectional head-quarters of the westernmost *Limes*.

Apart from three more slips containing fragments of other vocabularies as yet unidentified, § the literary remains among the finds on the *Limes* are merely a few extracts from treatises on divination ¶ and astrology, || and a fragment, *Doc. No.*

* See *Documents*, pp. ix, 6 sq., note 1. M. Chavannes' note explains the term *ku* 簡, which occurs at the beginning of the first paragraph of the text and specially designates this type of tablet. We have fragments of prismatic triangular tablets in *Documents*, No. 2, T. xx. ii. 2 (Pl. II), also containing a portion of a text from *Chi chiu chang*, and in *Documents*, No. 451, T. xv a. iii. 31 (Pl. XII), which contains a brief congratulatory message.

† Cf. M. Chavannes' notes on *Documents*, Nos. 4, 6, 7.

‡ See, e.g., *Documents*, Nos. 251, 372, 422-3, 540, 632, 641, 643-4.

§ See *Documents*, Nos. 397, 603 (?), 701.

¶ Cf. *Documents*, Nos. 59, 448, 638, with M. Chavannes' remarks p. xvi.

|| See *Documents*, No. 182, where the notch proves the slip to have formed part of a book.

425, containing a passage from a treatise on military affairs, composed in 229 B.C. ¶ That the solace of literature was not altogether absent from this desolate border-line may, perhaps, be concluded also from the fact that a fragmentary slip, *Doc. No. 622*, T. xxviii. 10, quotes the title of the 'Biographies of Eminent Women,' *Lieh nü chuan*, a book composed in 32-7 B.C.* There is a brief extract, too, from a medical treatise, together with a few fragments of a probably similar nature. † Finally, we may mention here the curious multiplication table, *Doc. No. 702*, T. xxvi, though it does not come, of course, under the category of books.

It is in this connexion with books that one more point of antiquarian interest concerning the ancient stationery of bamboo or wood may here find convenient notice. I have had numerous occasions in *Serindia* to discuss various striking illustrations and additions which our knowledge of that early Chinese stationery, as first based on the evidence of my finds of 1901 at the Niya Site, has received from the documents yielded by the ruins of the Tun-hung *Limes* and, to a smaller extent, of the Lou-lan station. ‡

The presence among the finds on the *Limes* of remains of books and writings which from a quasi-technical point of view, i.e., from that of the book-binder, to use a modern expression, may claim the same character, now enables us to clear up the question, previously very obscure, how proper cohesion and sequence could be assured for the numerous slips or tablets over which texts of any size written on bamboo or wood must necessarily have extended. M. Chavannes, who in a masterly discussion, had previously reviewed the information that can be gathered from Chinese textual sources about the ancient writing-materials used before the invention of paper, § did not fail to observe when

¶ I owe this last reference to M. Chavannes, who was kind enough on Oct. 3, 1917, the day of our last meeting, verbally to indicate the identification made by Mr. Wang Kuo-wei in his *Liu sha to chien*, reproducing a portion of the documents first published by M. Chavannes. The treatise was apparently known as *Li-mo* 力墨.

* See *Documents*, pp. xvii. 137. Two records of A.D. 75, *Documents*, Nos. 613, 614, prove that the watch-tower T. xxviii was occupied towards the end of the first century A.D.

† See *Document*, No. 395, a complete slip, with the fragments Nos. 396, 397.

‡ Cf. *Serindia*, pp. 382, 659, on the use of seal sockets and string grooves on wooden 'envelopes,' as provided for many of the Kharoshthi documents of the Niya Site; p. 382, on sealed lids closing small boxes intended to hold communications extending over several 'slips'; p. 597, on the standard size of slips.

§ Cf. above, p. 244 note. ‡

handling my new finds, that a number among the narrow tablets or 'slips' bore one or more notches on one of the edges. As the position of these was uniform on those 'slips' which manifestly belonged to one series, M. Chavannes rightly concluded that the notches were intended to serve the purpose of uniting such slips into one group.* But he added: 'Nous ne comprenons pas bien encore comment on assurait l'ordre de succession de ces fiches; il n'y a aucune numérotation pouvant tenir lieu de pagination, et on ne comprend pas comment il était possible de rétablir l'ordre lorsque quelque cause accidentelle l'avait bouleversé.'

The question thus raised is a very pertinent one, and makes it desirable to examine the materials available for its eventual solution. They are briefly the following: In the set of slips, *Doc. Nos. 9-24*, belonging to a calendar of A.D. 63, we find the left edge of each provided with three notches, disposed as Plate I shows, at exactly uniform distances. Another set of slips, *Doc. Nos. 25-35* (Plate II), forming part of the calendar for 59 B.C., shows two notches, also uniformly placed, but on the right edge of each slip. A third method of arrangement is found in the set of narrow bamboo slips, Nos. 524-34,† making up a medical notebook: here we find two notches on the right, one above, one below, and a third always placed on the left in the middle. Among single slips provided with notches only one, *Doc. No. 182*, needs special mention here, as its text supports the conclusion suggested by the single notch on the right, that it belonged to a book.‡ It is worthy of particular note that none of these slips bear writing on the reverse except those of the calendar of 59 B.C., where we find a system of consecutive numbering by means of cyclic characters.

Attention is claimed by the fact that no text is to be found on the reverse of any of the notched slips belonging to sets.§ It appeared *a priori* all the more significant in view of the inconvenience which the bulk and weight of books written on slips of bamboo or wood must in any case have caused. It necessarily raised a presumption that the fastening, for which the notches

* Cf. *Documents*, p. viii.

† See *Documents*, Pl. XIV for specimens.

‡ There are besides: Nos. 264, 306, both fragments of calendar slips, displaying one notch on the right in the existing top-portion; No. 478, containing only a signature, with one notch on the top to the right. Nos. 519, 610, with three notches and one respectively on the right, remain un deciphered and hence must be left aside for the present.

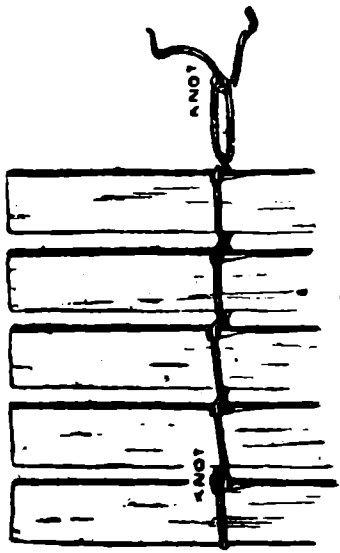
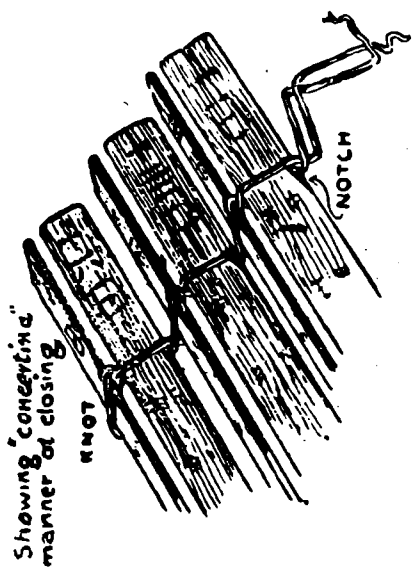
§ The same fact is clearly established by the evidence of Chinese literary records; cf. Chavannes, *Les livres chinois*, *J. Asiat.*, janvier-février 1905 (reprint), pp. 35 sqq.

were undoubtedly intended, must have been arranged in a way which brought the blank reverses of consecutive slips back to back and thus made it inconvenient to use the reverse surfaces for inscribing or reading any portions of the text. This conjectured arrangement recalled to my mind that of numerous Chinese and Tibetan manuscripts brought back from the walled up chapel of the 'Caves of the Thousand Buddhas' of Tun-huang, which are long sheets of paper consisting of several joined pieces and folded up into narrow pages somewhat after the fashion of a concertina. In these manuscripts, too, the reverse surface of the paper is always left unscribed, just as we find it regularly in Chinese printed books, in which as a matter of fact, we merely have an adaptation to block-printing of the 'concertina' method just alluded to.

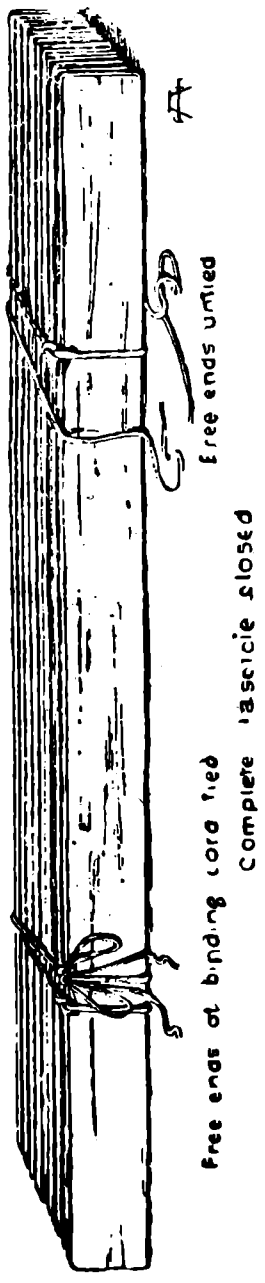
At this point I appealed to the often-proved technical ingenuity of my artist friend and assistant Mr. Fred. H. Andrews, Principal of the Technical Institute, Srinagar, Kashmir, and the following note and diagrams from his hand furnish what seems to me a very likely solution of the puzzle.

"Each 'slip,' i.e., small lath of wood (belonging to a series which contained one text or connected record), being a folio, it is clear that some means of binding must have been employed to maintain the folios in correct collation. The small notches observed on the edges of the 'slips,' and the fact that these exactly range when a number of 'slips' are collated, indicate that the connecting binding must have been of the nature of a string, an inference strengthened by the references in Chinese texts to silk or leather cords uniting the fascicles of wooden or bamboo slips mentioned by Prof. Chavannes. (cf. Chavannes, *Les livres chinois*, *Journal Asiat.*, janvier-février, 1905, pp. 43 sqq.)

"Experimenting with a fine raw silk thread, I found that a satisfactory result could be attained by the following method (see illustration). The cord is doubled end to end, the first 'slip' (folio one) is placed in the bend, and an ordinary knot tied with the two ends, care being taken that the encircling cord falls in the notch near one end of the lath, the purpose of which is to prevent the cord slipping. Folio two is then laid with its notch close to the knot, one end of the cord being below the lath and the other on top. The two ends are then half twisted round each other reversing the position of the cords, the upper becoming the lower and the lower the upper. Folio three is next placed between the cords with its notch against the half-twist, and the cords are again half



Method of binding slips
Fascicle open



twisted to secure it in position. The process is continued until the last page, after which a knot is tied, and the excess length of the two ends is left free to be used as a means of tying the complete record or chapter together, when it has been closed in concertina fashion. The same procedure is followed with the opposite end. The whole process is practically that followed by basket-makers and Indian 'chick' makers, sometimes described as 'wrap twining' or 'pairing,' and will be perhaps more clearly understood from the accompanying sketch.

"The reason for tying the first knot is to prevent the cord travelling with frequent opening and closing of the book, a tendency which it had, as experiment proved.

"When closed, the fascicle could be conveniently slipped into a rectangular case for protection. For lids of such cases, with string grooves and seal cavity, see *Ancient Khotan*, Pl. CXIV (N. xv, 345), and *Documents*, Pl. XXIII, L.A. vi. ii. 0200 (No. 751)."

Habent sua fata libelli. It seems strange that we should have to look among the relics from lonely desert posts of the borderline pushed out far toward the barbarian West for evidence to clear up details, even if they are only technical, concerning the books in which that glory of Chinese civilization, its ancient literature, found its earliest written record.

INTRODUCTION

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

by

Edouard CHAVANNES

Membre de l'Institut, Professeur au Collège de France.

Translated from the French

by

Madame Edouard CHAVANNES and H. Wilfred HOUSE

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.

The publication of this volume was undertaken by the representative of the Oxford University Press, with the help of a grant from the Secretary of State for India. For that assistance I am profoundly grateful.

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		
		43	483		
57	36, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 91, 92, 93	46	484		
		50	563, 564		
56	58, 399	53	565		
53	446	55	485		
52	413, 414	56	486		
48	338 (?)	61	566		
45	339 (?)	67	535 ⁴		
39	428, 429	68	579		
		75	613, 614		

1. Cf. A. STEIN, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, Vol. II, pp. 50-65 and pp. 92-166.
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 Lop-nor.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,⁵ 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 *Lǐ 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'IIEN* 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'u* 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 *Tzu chih t'ung chien* (chap. XX, p. 4 v°), of *Sou-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'ian* (*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 *Tzù 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式師悉因留敦煌

"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 *Érh-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-yüan* 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 shoals 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-tzü* 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.: 於是自敦煌西至圓澤往往起亭; 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 Chi* 張勳, 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授發夫討畔羌急急如律令馬無疋驢二百頭日給.

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=幕) 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'eng*, 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 *Oh'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 archæologists of the twelfth century was not influenced by the remembrance of formulæ 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. PELLICOT.)

2. Cf. Nos. 1, 2, 137, 203, 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^o) speaks of garrison troops which guard the boundary 備塞戍卒; in another place (chap. XCIV, p. 4 r^o) 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 feng-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 *Hedun-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 Hlouen-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,"⁷ the *Yang-wei* 揚威 company "which raises prestige,"⁸ the *Hsien-wei* 顯威 company "which manifests prestige,"⁹ the *An-han* 安漢 company "which ensures peace for the *Han*,"¹⁰

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. PELLIIOT.)

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°.

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° : 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 nuntiari."

"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燔皆擐弓而馳荷兵而走。

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°) 關外西北又有五烽候望者居之各相去百里

4. "*Ch'ien Han shu*," chap. XCIV, a, p. 13 r°: 是時漢邊郡燧火候望精明。

5. "*Ch'ien Han shu*," chap. XCVI, b, p. 5 v°: 障候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, eighth, 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 苜 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 yü 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. PELLLOT.)

2. 唐六典曰凡烽候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. 十里一走馬五里一搗鞭都護軍書至匈奴國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-chou 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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Translated from the French

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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^o): 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. "*Saï-ma-Ch'ien*," chap. CXXIII, p. 1 v^o.

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 cavalymen 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, 323, 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* 馬失 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* 鏃 arrows⁹ and *kao* 鏃 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 793.
 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, f° 1-2, has shown that Chavannes' slip No. 8, as well as Nos. 397, 603 and 671, belonged to a lost lexicographical work called 倉頡篇 "*Ts'ang hieh 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-so-tung* of *Tun-huang* is the scrap of paper on which is written a fragment of the "*Chan kuo ts'ê*" 騷國策; 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)^a 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-t'eng*,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. I, p. 29 r^o—v^o, the poem entitled "關山月."

4. *Po-t'eng* 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 rawboned 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。辛苦向金縢。
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 *T's'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。秦家築城備胡處。漢家還有烽火燃。烽火燃不息。征戰無已時。野戰格鬪死。敗馬號鳴向天悲。烏鳶啄人腸。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-tung*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 ching*."—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^o-21r^o.

3. The river *Wu-tung* 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 泉 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^o.

(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 *Hsiung-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 hei*," chap. IX, pp. 16 v°-17 r°.

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 hei*," chap. VI, p. 10 r°-v°.

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-wei* 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。舉築諧汝聲。男兒寧當格鬥死。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。結髮行學君。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。三子到墩煌。二子詣隴西。五子遠國去。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°.

A CHINESE EXPEDITION ACROSS THE PAMIRS AND HINDUKUSH

A.D. 747

BY

SIR AUREL STEIN, K.C.I.E.

At the beginning of my second Central-Asian journey (1906-08), and again at that of the third (1913-16), I had the good fortune to visit ground in the high snowy range of the Hindukush which, however inaccessible and remote it may seem from the scenes of the great historical dramas of Asia, was yet in the 8th century A.D. destined to witness events bound up with a struggle of momentous bearing for vast areas of the continent. I mean the glacier pass of the Darkōt (15,400 feet above the sea level) and the high valleys to the north and south of it through which leads an ancient route connecting the Pāmirs and the uppermost headwaters of the Oxus with the Dard territories on the Indus, and thus with the north-west marches of India. *

* [Two sketch-maps should accompany this article, with the kind permission of the Royal Geographical Society, in whose *Journal* (February, 1922) this paper was first published. Unfortunately the blocks have not yet arrived at the time of going to press. Ed. N. C. R.]

For convenient reference regarding the general topography of this mountain region may be recommended also Sheet No. 42 of the 1 : 1,000,000 map of Asia published by the Survey of India (Calcutta, 1919).

The events referred to arose from the prolonged conflict with the Arabs in the west and the rising power of the Tibetans in the south into which the Chinese empire under the T'ang dynasty was brought by its policy of Central-Asian expansion. Our knowledge of the memorable expedition of which I propose to treat here and of the historical developments leading up to it is derived wholly from the official Chinese records contained in the *Annals* of the T'ang dynasty. They were first rendered generally accessible by the extracts which M. Chavannes, the great Sinologue, published in his invaluable *Documents sur les Turcs occidentaux*.*

In order to understand fully the details of the remarkable exploit which brought a Chinese army right across the high inhospitable plateaus of the Pāmirs to the uppermost Oxus valley, and thence across the ice-covered Darkōt down to the valleys of Yāsin and Gilgit draining into the Indus, it is necessary to pay closest regard to the topography of that difficult ground. Modern developments arising from the Central-Asian interests of two great Asiatic powers, the British and Russian empires, have since the eighties of the last century helped greatly to add to our knowledge of the regions comprised in, or adjacent to, the great mountain massif in the centre of Asia which classical geography designated by the vague but convenient name of *Imaos*. But much of the detailed topographical information is not as yet generally accessible to students. Even more than elsewhere personal familiarity with the ground in its topographical and antiquarian aspects seems here needed for a full comprehension of historical details.

This local knowledge I was privileged to acquire in the course of the two Central-Asian expeditions already referred to, and, accordingly, I have taken occasion to elucidate the facts connected with that memorable Chinese exploit in *Serindia*, the detailed report on my second journey, recently issued from the Oxford University Press. The bulk and largely archæological contents of this work may prevent that account from attracting the attention of the geographical student. Hence, with the kind permission of the Delegates of the Oxford University Press, I gladly avail myself of the opportunity to communicate here the main results of my investigations.

Some preliminary remarks seem needed to make clear the political and military situation which prevailed in Central Asia during the first half of the 8th century A.D. and which accounted

* *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) occidentaux, recueillis et commentés par Edouard Chavannes, Membre de l'Institut, etc.*, published by the Imperial Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg, 1903; see in particular pp. 149-154.

for the enterprise to be discussed here.* After a long and difficult struggle the Chinese under the great T'ang emperors T'ai-tsung 太宗 (A.D. 627-650) and Kao-tsung 高宗 (A.D. 650-684) succeeded in vanquishing first the Northern Turks (A.D. 630), and after a short interval also the Western Turks. They were the principal branches of that great Turkish nation which since its victory over the Juan-juan (Avars) and the Hoa, or Hephthalites, about the middle of the 7th century had made itself master of inner Asia. By A.D. 659 the Chinese had regained political predominance, and for the most part also military control, over the great Central-Asian territories roughly corresponding to what is now known as Chinese Turkestan, after having lost them for about four centuries. †

This renewed effort at Central-Asian expansion, like that first made by the great Han emperor Wu-ti (140-86 B.C.), had for its object partly the protection of north-western China from nomadic inroads and partly the control of the great Central-Asian trade route passing through the Tārīm Basin. Stretching from east to west between the great mountain ranges of the T'ien-shan in the north and the K'un-lun in the south, the Tārīm Basin is filled for the most part by huge drift-sand deserts. Yet it was destined by nature to serve as the main overland line for the trade intercourse between the Far East and Western Asia, and recent archæological explorations have abundantly proved its great importance generally for the interchange of civilizations between China, India, Irān, and the classical West.

During Han times, when China's great export trade of silk had first begun about 110 B.C. to find its way westwards through the strings of oases scattered along the foot of the T'ien-shan and K'un-lun, the Chinese hold upon the 'Western Kingdoms' with their settled and highly civilized populations had been threatened mainly by inroads of the Huns and other nomadic tribes from the north. After the reconquest under the Emperor Kao-tsung the situation was essentially different. The danger from the nomadic north had lessened. Troubles with the medley of Turkish tribes left in possession of the wide grazing areas beyond the T'ien-shan never ceased. Yet the Chinese administration by a well-organized system of garrisons, and still more by diplomatic skill, was well able to hold them in check. But additional and

* For a masterly exposition from Chinese and Western sources of all historical facts here briefly summed up, see M. Chavannes 'Essai sur l'histoire des Tou-kiue occidentaux,' forming the concluding portion of his *Documents sur les Turcs occidentaux*, pp. 217-303.

† Cf. Chavannes, *Turcs occidentaux*, pp. 286 seq.

greater dangers had soon to be faced from other sides. The claim to the succession of the whole vast dominion of the Western Turks was drawing the administration of the Chinese protectorate, established in the Tārīm Basin and known as the 'Four Garrisons,' into constant attempts to assert effective authority also to the west of the great meridional range, the ancient *Imaos*, in the regions comprising what is now Russian and Afghān Turkestan.*

Considering the vast distances separating these regions from China proper and the formidable difficulties offered by the intervening great deserts and mountain ranges, Chinese control over them was from the outset bound to be far more precarious than that over the Tārīm Basin. But the dangers besetting Chinese dominion in Central Asia increased greatly with the appearance of two new forces upon the scene. Already in the last quarter of the seventh century the newly rising power of the Tibetans seriously threatened, and for a time effaced, the Chinese hold upon the Tārīm Basin. † Even after its recovery by the Chinese in A.D. 692 the struggle never quite ceased.

Another and almost equally great threat to China's Central Asian dominion arose in the west through the advance of Arab conquest to the Oxus and beyond. About A.D. 670 it had already made itself felt in Tokhāristān, the important territory on the middle Oxus comprising the greater part of the present Afghān Turkestan. Between A.D. 705 and 715 the campaigns of the famous Arab general Qotaiba had carried the Mohammedan arms triumphantly into Sogdiana, between Oxus and Yaxartes, and even further. ‡ By taking advantage of internal troubles among the Arabs and by giving support to all the principalities between the Yaxartes and the Hindukush which the Arabs threatened with extinction, the Chinese managed for a time to stem this wave of Mohammedan aggression. But the danger continued from this side, and the Chinese position in Central Asia became even more seriously jeopardised when the Tibetans soon after A.D. 741 advanced to the Oxus Valley and succeeded in joining hands with the Arabs against their common foes.

Balked for the time in their attempts to secure the Tārīm Basin, the Tibetans had only one line open to effect this junction.

* For very interesting notices of the administrative organization which the Chinese attempted soon after A.D. 659 to impose upon the territories from the Yaxartes to the Oxus and even south of the Hindukush, see Chavannes, *Turcs occidentaux*, pp. 288 sqq.

† Cf. Chavannes, *Turcs occidentaux*, p. 280 sqq.

‡ See Chavannes, *ibid.*, pp. 288 sqq.

It led first down the Indus from Ladāk through Baltistān (the 'Great P'o-lü' 大勃律 of the Chinese Annals) to the Hindukush territories of Gilgit and Yāsīn, both comprised in the 'Little P'o-lü' 小勃律 of the Chinese records.* Thence the passes of the Darkōt and the Barōghil—the latter a saddle in the range separating the Oxus from the Chitrāl River headwaters—would give the Tibetans access to Wakhān; through this open portion of the upper Oxus Valley and through fertile Badakhshān the Arabs established on the Middle Oxus might be reached with comparative ease. But an advance along the previous portions of this route was beset with very serious difficulties, not merely on account of the great height of the passes to be traversed and of the extremely confined nature of the gorges met with on the Indus and the Gilgit River, but quite as much through the practical absence of local resources sufficient to feed an invading force anywhere between Ladāk and Badakhshān.

Nevertheless the persistent advance of the Tibetans along this difficult line is clearly traceable in the Chinese records. Great P'o-lü, i.e., Baltistān, had already become subject to them before A.D. 722. About that time they attacked 'Little P'o-lü,' declaring, as the T'ang Annals tell us, to Mo-chin-mang 沒謹忙 its king, "It is not your kingdom which we covet, but we wish to use your route in order to attack the Four Garrisons 四鎮 (i.e., the Chinese in the Tārim Basin)".† In A.D. 722 timely military aid rendered by the Chinese enabled this king to defeat the Tibetan design. But after three changes of reign the Tibetans won over his successor Su-shih-li-chih 蘇失利之, and inducing him to marry a Tibetan princess secured a footing in "Little P'o-lü." "Thereupon," in the words of the *T'ang shu*, "more than twenty kingdoms to the north-west became all subject to the Tibetans".‡ These events occurred shortly after A.D. 741. §

The danger thus created by the junction between Tibetans and Arabs forced the Chinese to special efforts to recover their

* Cf. for this identification Chavannes, '*Turcs occidentaux*,' p. 150, and '*Notes supplémentaires*'; also my '*Ancient Khotan*,' i. pp. 6 sqq.

† See Chavannes, '*Turcs occidentaux*,' p. 150.

‡ Cf. Chavannes, *ibid.*, p. 151. By the twenty kingdoms are obviously meant petty hill principalities on the upper Oxus from Wakhān downwards and probably also others in the valleys south of Hindukush, such as Mastūj and Chitrāl.

§ Cf. Stein, *Ancient Khotan*, i. p. 7. A.D. 741 is the date borne by the Imperial edict investing Su-shih-li-chih's immediate predecessor; its text is still extant in the records extracted by M. Chavannes, *Turcs occidentaux*, pp. 211 sqq.

hold upon Yāsin and Gilgit. Three successive expeditions despatched by the "Protector of the Four Garrisons," the Chinese Governor-General, had failed, when a special decree of the Emperor Hsüan-tsung in A.D. 747 entrusted the Deputy Protector Kao Hsien-chih 高仙芝, a general of Korean extraction, commanding the military forces in the Tārīm Basin, with the enterprise to be traced here.

We owe our detailed knowledge of it to the official biography of Kao Hsien-chih preserved in the T'ang Annals and translated by M. Chavannes. To that truly great scholar, through whose premature death in 1918 all branches of historical research concerning the Far East and Central Asia have suffered an irreparable loss, belongs full credit for having recognized that Kao Hsien-chih's remarkable expedition led him and his force across the Pāmirs and over the Barōghil and Darkōt passes. But he did not attempt to trace in detail the actual routes followed by Kao Hsien-chih on this hazardous enterprise or to localize the scenes of all its striking events. To do this in the light of personal acquaintance with the topography of these regions, their physical conditions, and their scanty ancient remains, is my object in the following pages.

With a force of 10,000 cavalry and infantry Kao Hsien-chih started in the spring of A.D. 747 from *An-hsi* 安西, then the headquarters of the Chinese administration in the Tārīm Basin and corresponding to the present town and oasis of Kuchā.* In thirty-five days he reached *Su-lé* 疏勒, or Kāshgar, through Ak-su and by the great caravan road leading along the foot of the T'ien-shan. Twenty days more brought his force to the military 'post of the Ts'ung-ling 葱嶺 mountains,' established in the position of the present Tāsh-kurghān in Sarikol.†

* For these and all other details taken from M. Chavannes' translation of Kao Hsien-chih's biography in the *T'ang shu*, see *Turcs occidentaux*, pp. 152 sqq.

† *Ts'ung-ling* or "the Onion Mountains" is the ancient Chinese designation for the great snowy range which connects the T'ien-shan in the north with the K'un-lun and Hindukush in the south and forms the mighty eastern rim of the Pāmirs. The Chinese term is sometimes extended to the high valleys and plateaus of the latter also. The range culminates near its centre in the great ice-clad peak of Muztāgh-atā and those to the north of it, rising to over 25,000 feet above sea level. It is to this great mountain chain, through which all routes from the Oxus to the Tārīm Basin pass, that the term *Imaos* is clearly applied in Ptolemy's *Geography*.

The great valley of Sarikol, situated over 15,000 feet above sea level, largely cultivated in ancient times, forms the natural base for any military operations across the Pāmirs; for early accounts of it in Chinese historical texts and in the records of old travellers from the East and West, cf. *Ancient Khotan*, i. pp. 27 sqq. Descriptions of the present Sarikol and of the two main routes which connect it with Kāshgar, through the Gez Valley to the north of Muztāgh-atā and across the Chichiklil Pass in the south, are given in my *Ruins of Khotan*, pp. 67 sqq., and *Desert Cathay*, i. pp. 89 sqq.

Thence by a march of twenty days the "valley of Po-mi" 播蜜川, or the Pāmirs, was gained, and after another twenty days he arrived in "the kingdom of the five Shih-ni" 識匿, i. e., the present Shighnān on the Oxus.

The marching distance here indicated agrees well with the time which large caravans of men and transport animals would at present need to cover the same ground. But how the Chinese general managed to feed so large a force after once it had entered the tortuous gorges and barren high valleys beyond the outlying oases of the present Kāshgar and Yangi-hissār districts is a problem which might look formidable, indeed, to any modern commander. The biography in the Annals particularly notes that "at that time the foot soldiers all kept horses (i. e., ponies) on their own account." Such a provision of transport must have considerably increased the mobility of the Chinese troops. But it also implied greatly increased difficulties on the passage through ranges which, with the exception of certain portions of the Pāmirs, do not afford sufficient grazing to keep animals alive without liberal provision of fodder.

It was probably as a strategic measure meant to reduce the difficulties of supply in this inhospitable Pāmīr region that Kao Hsien-chih divided his forces into three columns before starting his attack upon the position held by the Tibetans at the fortress of *Lien-yün* 連雲堡. M. Chavannes has shown good reason for assuming that by the river *P'o-lé* 婆勒 (or *So-lé* 娑勒), which is described as flowing in front of *Lien-yün*, is meant the Ab-i-Panja branch of the Oxus, and that *Lien-yün* itself occupied a position corresponding to the present village of Sarhad, but on the opposite, or southern, side of the river, where the route from the Barōghil Pass debouches on the Ab-i-Panja. We shall return to this identification in detail hereafter. Here it will suffice to show that this location is also clearly indicated by the details recorded of the concentration of Kao Hsien-chih's forces upon *Lien-yün*.

Of the three columns which were to operate from different directions and to effect a simultaneous junction before *Lien-yün* on the thirteenth day of the seventh month (about the middle of August), the main force under Kao Hsien-chih himself and the Imperial Commissioner Pien Ling-ch'êng 邊合誠 passed through the kingdom of Hu-mi 護密, or Wakhān, ascending the main Oxus valley from the west. Another column which is said to have moved upon *Lien-yün* by the route of *Ch'ih-fo-t'ang* 赤佛堂,

'the shrine of the red Buddha', * may be assumed, in view of a subsequent mention of this route below, to have operated from the opposite direction down the headwaters of the Ab-i-Panja. These could be reached without serious difficulty from the Sarikol base either over the Tāgh-dumbāsh Pāmīr and the Wakhjir Pass (16,200 feet), † or by way of the Naiza-tāsh Pass and the Little Pāmīr.

Finally, a third column composed of 3,000 horsemen, which was to make its way to Lien-yün by *Pei-ku* 北谷, or 'the northern gorge,' may be supposed to have descended from the side of the Great Pāmīr. For such a move from the north either one of the several passes could be used which lead across the Nicholas Range south-east of Victoria Lake, or possibly a glacier track, as yet unexplored, leading from the latter into one of the gorges which debouch east of Sarhad. ‡ In any case it is clear that by thus bringing up his forces on convergent but wholly distinct lines, and by securing for himself a fresh base in distant Shighnān, the Chinese general effectively guarded against those difficulties of supplies and transport which then as now, would make the united move of so large a body of men across the Pāmīrs a physical impossibility.

The crossing of the Pāmīrs by a force which in its total strength amounted to ten thousand men is so remarkable a military achievement that the measures which alone probably made it possible deserve some closer examination, however succinct the Chinese record is upon which we have to base it. So much appears to me clear that the march was not effected in one body but in three columns moving up from Kāshgər in successive stages by routes of which Tāsh-kurghān, 'the post of the Ts'ungling Mountains,' was the advanced base or *point d'appui*. If Kao Hsien-chih moved ahead with the first column or detachment to Shighnān and was followed at intervals by the other two detachments the advantages gained as regards supplies and transport must have been very great. His own column would have reached a fresh base of supplies in Shighnān while the second was moving across the main Pāmīr, and the third arriving

* The term *fo-t'ang* 佛堂 which M. Chavannes translates "la salle du Bouddha . . ." designates, according to Dr. Giles's Chinese-English Dictionary, p. 1330, "a family shrine or oratory for the worship of Buddha." Considering the locality, the rendering of *t'ang* by "shrine" seems here appropriate.

† For descriptions of this route, cf. my *Ruins of Khotan* pp. 60 sqq. and *Desert Cathay*, i. pp. 83 sqq.

‡ Regarding the existence of this track, cf. the information obtained in the course of my third Central-Asian journey, *Geographical Journal*, xlviii (1910), p. 216.

in Sarikol from the plains. Thus the great strain of having to feed simultaneously the whole force on ground absolutely without local resources was avoided. It must be remembered that once established on the Oxus, the Chinese Commissariat could easily draw upon the abundant produce of Badakhshān, and that for the column left on the Pāmirs the comparatively easy route across the Alai would be available for drawing supplies from the rich plains of Farghāna, then still under Chinese control.

By disposing his force *en échelon* from Shighnān to Sarikol Kao Hsien-chih obtained also a strategically advantageous position. He was thus able to concert the simultaneous convergent movement of his columns upon the Tibetans at Sarhad without unduly exposing any of his detachments to separate attack and defeat by a superior Tibetan force; for the Tibetans could not leave their position at Sarhad without imminent risk of being cut off from the Barōghil, their only line of communication. At the same time the disposition of the Chinese forces effectively precluded any Tibetan advance either upon Sarikol or Badakhshān. Difficult as Kao Hsien-chih's operations must have been across the Pāmirs, yet he had the great advantage of commanding two, if not three, independent lines of supplies (from Kāshgar-Yārkand; Badakhshān; eventually Farghāna), whereas the Tibetan force of about equal strength, cooped up at the debouchure of the Barōghil, had only a single line, and one of exceptional natural difficulty, to fall back upon. Of the territories of Yāsīn, Gilgit, Baltistān, through which this line led, we know that they could not provide any surplus supplies for an army. *

The problem, as it seems to me, is not so much how the Chinese general succeeded in overcoming the difficulties of his operations across the Pāmirs, but how the Tibetans ever managed to bring a force of nine or ten thousand men across the Darkōt to Sarhad and to maintain it there in the almost total absence of local resources. It is certainly significant that neither before nor after these events do we hear of any other attempt of the Tibetans to attack the Chinese power in the Tārīm Basin by way of the uppermost Oxus, constant, and in the end successful, as their aggression was during the eighth century A.D.

The boldness of the plan which made Kao Hsien-chih's offensive possible and crowned it with deserved success must, I think, command admiration quite as much as the actual crossing of the Darkōt. The student of military history has, indeed,

* Cf. *Ancient Khotan*, i. pp. 11 sqq.

reason to regret that the Chinese record does not furnish us with any details about the organization which rendered this first and, as far as we know, last crossing of the Pāmirs by a large regular force possible. But whatever our opinion may be about the fighting qualities of the Chinese soldier as judged by our standards—and there is significant evidence of their probably not having been much more serious in T'ang times than they are now,—it is certain that those who know the formidable obstacles of deserts and mountains which Chinese troops have successfully faced and overcome during modern times, will not feel altogether surprised at the power of resource and painstaking organization which the success of Kao Hsien-chih's operations indisputably attests in that long-forgotten Chinese leader and those who shared his efforts.

The location of *Lien-yün* near Sarhad, as originally proposed by M. Chavannes, is confirmed by the description of the battle by which the Chinese general rendered himself master of the Tibetan position and of the route it was intended to guard. The three Chinese columns, operating, as I have shown, from the west, east and north, "had agreed to effect their junction on the thirteenth day of the seventh month (August) between seven and nine o'clock in the morning at the Tibetan stronghold of Lien-yün. In that stronghold there were a thousand soldiers; moreover, at a distance of fifteen *li* (about three miles) to the south of the rampart, advantage had been taken of the mountains to erect palisades behind which there were eight to nine thousand troops. At the foot of the rampart there flowed the river of the valley of *P'o-lé* which was in flood and could not be crossed*. Kao Hsien-chih made an offering of three victims to the river; he directed his captains to select their best soldiers and their best horses; each man carried rations of dry food for three days. In the morning they assembled by the river bank. As the waters were difficult to cross, officers and soldiers all thought the enterprise senseless. But when the other river bank was reached, neither had the men wetted their standards nor the horses their saddle cloths.

"After the troops had crossed and formed their ranks, Kao Hsien-chih, overjoyed, said to Pien Ling-ch'êng (the Imperial Commissioner): 'For a moment, while we were in the midst of the passage, our force was beaten if the enemy had come. Now that we have crossed and formed ranks, it is proof that Heaven delivers our enemies into our hands. He at once ascended the

* M. Chavannes has shown (*Turcs occidentaux*, p. 154) that this name *P'o-lé* is a misreading, easily explained in Chinese writing for *So-lé* mentioned elsewhere as a town in Hu-mi or Wakhân.

mountain and engaged in a battle which lasted from the *ch'én* period (7-9 a.m.) to the *ssü* period (9-11 a.m.) He inflicted a great defeat upon the barbarians, who fled when the night came. He pursued them, killed 5,000 men and made 1,000 prisoners; all the rest dispersed. He took more than 1,000 horses, and warlike stores and arms beyond counting."

The analysis given above of the routes followed by the Chinese columns and what we shall show below of Kao Hsien-chih's three days' march to Mount *T'an-chü* 坦駒嶺, or the Darköt, confirm M. Chavannes in locating the Tibetan stronghold of Lien-yün near the present Sarhad, the last permanent settlement on the uppermost Oxus. It is equally clear from the description of the river crossing that the Chinese concentration must have taken place on the right or northern bank of the Ab-i-Panja, where the hamlets constituting the present Sarhad are situated, while the stronghold of Lien-yün lay on the opposite left bank.

Before I was able to visit the ground in May, 1906, I had already expressed the belief that the position taken up by the Tibetan main force, fifteen *li* (circ. 3 miles) to the south of Lien-yün, must be looked for in the valley which debouches on the Ab-i-Panja opposite to Sarhad*. It is through this open valley that the remarkable depression in the main Hindukush range represented by the Barōghil and Shawitakh saddles (12,460 and 12,560 feet, respectively) is gained. I also surmised that the Chinese general, apart from the confidence aroused by the successful river crossing, owed his victory mainly to a flanking movement by which his troops gained the heights and thus successfully turned the fortified line behind which the Tibetans were awaiting them.

This opinion was confirmed by what I saw of the valley leading to the Oxus on my descent from the Barōghil on May 19, 1906, and by the examination I was able to make two days later of the mountain-side flanking its debouchure from the west. The valley into which the route leads down from the Barōghil is quite open and easy about Zartighar, the southernmost hamlet. There a ruined watch-tower shows that defence of the route had been a concern also in modern times. Further down the valley-bottom gradually contracts, though still offering easy going, until, from a point about two miles below Zartighar to beyond the scattered homesteads of Pitkhar, † its width is reduced to between one-half and one-third of a mile. On both sides this defile is flanked

* See *Ancient Khotan*, i. p. 7.

† The *Pizkhar* of sketch-map B is a misprint.

by high and very precipitous rocky ridges, the last offshoots of spurs which descend from the main Hindukush watershed.

These natural defences seemed to provide just the kind of position which would recommend itself to the Tibetans wishing to bar approach to the Barōghil, and thus to safeguard their sole line of communication with the Indus Valley. The width of the defile accounts for the comparatively large number of defenders recorded by the Chinese Annals for the enemy's main line; the softness of the ground at its bottom, which is almost perfectly level, covered with fine grass in the summer, and distinctly swampy in the spring owing to imperfect drainage, explain the use of palisades, at first sight a rather strange method of fortification in these barren mountains.* Finally the position seemed to agree curiously well with what two historical instances of modern times, the fights in 1304 at Guru and on the Karo-lā, had revealed as the typical and time-honoured Tibetan scheme of defence—to await attack behind a wall erected across the open ground of a valley or saddle.

There remained the question whether the defile of Pitkhar was capable of being turned by an attack on the flanking heights, such as the Chinese record seemed plainly to indicate. The possibility of such a movement on the east was clearly precluded by the extremely precipitous character of the flanking spur, and still more by the fact that the summer flood of the Ab-i-Panja in the very confined gorge above Sarhad would have rendered that spur inaccessible for the Chinese operating from the northern bank of the river. All the greater was my satisfaction when I heard from my Wakhī informants of ruins of an ancient fort, known as *Kansir*, situated on the precipitous crest of the flanking spur westwards, almost opposite to Pitkhar. During the single day's halt, which to my regret was all that circumstances would allow me at Sarhad, I was kept too busy otherwise to make a close

* In my note in *Ancient Khotan*, p. 9, I had ventured to suggest that, considering how scanty timber must at all times have been about Sarhad, there was some probability that walls or "Sangars" constructed of loose stones were really meant by the "palisades" mentioned in the translation of the passage from the T'ang Annals.

This suggestion illustrates afresh the risk run in doubting the accuracy of Chinese records on quasi-topographical points without adequate local knowledge. On the one hand, I found that the peculiar nature of the soil in the defile would make the construction of heavy stone walls inadvisable, if not distinctly difficult. On the other, my subsequent march up the Ab-i-Panja showed that, though timber was as scarce about Sarhad itself as I had been led to assume, yet there was abundance of willow and other jungle in parts of the narrow river gorge one march higher up near the debouchure of the Shaor and Bahārak streams. This could well have been used for palisades after being floated down by the river.

inspection of the ground where the Tibetan post of Lien-yün might possibly have been situated. Nothing was known locally of old remains on the open alluvial plain which adjoins the river at the mouth of the valley coming from the Barōghil; nor were such likely to survive long on ground liable to inundation from the Oxus, flowing here in numerous shifting channels with a total width of over a mile.

Even if the exact position of Lien-yün thus remained undetermined, my short stay at Sarhad sufficed to convince me how closely local conditions agreed with the details of Kao Hsien-chih's exploit in crossing the Oxus. The river at the time of the summer flood must, indeed, present a very imposing appearance as it spreads out its waters over the wide valley bottom at Sarhad. But the very separation of the waters makes fording always possible, even at that season, provided the passage takes place in the early morning, when the flood due to the melting snow and ice is temporarily reduced by the effect of the night's frost on the glaciers and snow-beds at the head of the Ab-i-Panja. The account in the Annals distinctly show that the river passage must have been carried out at an early hour of the morning, and thus explains the complete success of an otherwise difficult operation.

I was able to trace the scene of the remaining portion of the Chinese general's exploit when, on May 21, I visited the ruined fortifications reported on the steep spur overlooking the debouchure of the Barōghil stream from the west and known as *Kansir*. After riding across the level plain of sand and marsh, and then along the flat bottom of the Pitkhar defile for a total distance of about three miles, we left our ponies at a point a little to the south of some absolutely impracticable rock-faces which overlook Pitkhar from the west. Then, guided by a few Wakhis, I climbed to the crest of the western spur, reaching it only after an hour's hard scramble over steep slopes of rock and shingle. There, beyond a stretch of easily sloping ground and about 300 feet higher, rose the old fort of *Kansir* at the extreme north end of the crest. Between the narrow ridge occupied by the walls and bastions and the continuation of the spur south-westwards a broad dip seemed to offer an easy descent towards the hamlet of *Karkat* on the Oxus.

It was clearly for the purpose of guarding this approach that the little fort had been erected on this exposed height. On the north and east, where the end of the spur falls away in unscalable cliffs to the main valley of the Oxus and towards the mouth of the Pitkhar defile, some 1,600-1,700 feet below, struc-

tural defences were needless. But the slope of the ridge facing westwards and the narrow neck to the south had been protected on the crest by a bastioned wall for a distance of about 400 feet. Three bastions facing west and south-west, and one at the extreme southern point, still rose, in fair preservation in parts, to a height of over 30 feet. The connecting wall-curtains had suffered more, through the foundations giving way on the steep incline. Of structures inside the little fort there remained no trace.

Definite archæological evidence as to the antiquity of the little fortification was supplied by the construction of the walls. Outside a core of closely packed rough stones they show throughout a solid brick facing up to 6 feet in thickness with regular thin layers of brushwood separating the courses of large sun-dried bricks. Now this systematic use of brushwood layers is a characteristic peculiarity of ancient Chinese construction in Central Asia, intended to assure greater consistency under climatic conditions of particular dryness in regions where ground and structures alike are liable to constant wind-erosion. My explorations around Lop-nôr and on the ancient Chinese *Limes* of Tun-huang have conclusively proved that it dates from the very commencement of Chinese expansion into Central Asia.* At the same time my explorations in the Târîm Basin have shown also that the Tibetan invaders of the T'ang period, when building their forts, did not neglect to copy this constructive expedient of their Chinese predecessors and opponents in these regions.† On various grounds which cannot be discussed here in detail it appears to me very probable that the construction of the Kansir walls was due to the Tibetan invaders of Wakhân. But whether the fortification existed already when Kao Hsien-chih carried the Tibetan main position by an attack on its mountain flank, or whether it was erected by the Tibetans when they returned after the retirement of the Chinese some years later, and were, perhaps, anxious to guard against any repetition of this move outflanking a favourite defensive position, I am unable to say.

The victory thus gained by Kao Hsien-chih on the Oxus had been signal, and it was followed up by him with the boldness of a truly great commander. The Imperial Commissioner and certain other high officers feared the risks of a further advance.

* Cf., e.g., *Desert Cathay*, i. pp. 387 sqq., 540 sqq.; ii. pp. 44, 50, etc.

† This was distinctly observed by me in the Tibetan forts at Mirân and Mazâr-tâgh, built and occupied in the 8th century A.D.: cf. *Serindia*, pp. 457, 1285 sqq.

So Kao Hsien-chih decided to leave them behind, together with over 3,000 men who were sick or worn out by the previous hardships, and to let them guard Lien-yün. With the rest of his troops he "pushed on, and after three days arrived at Mount *T'an-chü*; from that point downwards there were precipices for over forty *li* (circ. 8 miles)* in a straight line. Kao Hsien-chih surmised: 'If the barbarians of *A-nu-yüeh* 阿弩越 were to come to meet us promptly this would be the proof of their being well-disposed.' Fearing besides that his soldiers would not care to face the descent [from Mount *T'an-chü*], he employed the stratagem of sending twenty horsemen ahead with orders to disguise themselves in dress as if they were barbarians of the town of *A-nu-yüeh*, and to meet his troops on the summit of the mountain. When the troops had got up Mount *T'an-chü* they, in fact, refused to make the descent, saying: 'to what sort of places would the Commissioner-in-Chief have us go?' Before they had finished speaking, the twenty men who had been sent ahead came to meet them with the report: 'The barbarians of the town of *A-nu-yüeh* are all well-disposed and eager to welcome you; the destruction of the bridge over the *So-yi River* 娑夷水 is completed.' Kao Hsien-chih pretended to rejoice, and on his giving the order all the troops effected their descent."

After three more marches the Chinese force was in reality met by 'the barbarians of the town of *A-nu-yüeh*' offering their submission. The same day Kao Hsien-chih sent ahead an advance guard of a thousand horsemen, charging its leader to secure the persons of the chiefs of Little *P'o-lü* through a ruse. This order having been carried out, on the following day Kao Hsien-chih himself occupied *A-nu-yüeh* and had the five or six dignitaries who were supporting the Tibetans executed. He then hastened to have the bridge broken which spanned the *So-yi River* at a distance of sixty *li*, or about 12 miles, from *A-nu-yüeh*. "Scarcely had the bridge been destroyed in the evening when the Tibetans, mounted and on foot, arrived in great numbers, but it was then too late for them to attain their object. The bridge was the length of an arrowshot; it had taken a whole year to construct it. It had been built at the time when the Tibetans, under the pretext of using its route, had by deceit possessed themselves of Little *P'o-lü*." Thus secured from a Tibetan counter-attack on *Yäsin*, Kao Hsien-chih prevailed upon the king of Little *P'o-lü* to give

* That the *li* as used in Chinese records relating to Central Asia was during T'ang times and before approximately equivalent to one-fifth of a mile is fully proved by evidence discussed by me in *Serindia* (see ii, pp. 734 sq and elsewhere).

himself up from his hiding-place and completely pacified the territory.

The personal acquaintance with the ground which I gained in 1900 on my journey up the Yärkhun or Mastūj Valley and across to Sarhad, and again on my move up Yāsīn and across the Darkōt in 1913, has rendered it easy to trace the successive stages here recorded of Kao Hsien-chih's great exploit. All the details furnished by the Chinese record agree accurately with the important route that leads across the depression in the Hindukush range, formed by the adjacent Barōghil and Shawitakh Passes, to the sources of the Mastūj River, and then, surmounting southwards the ice-covered Darkōt Pass (circ. 15,400 feet), descends the valley of Yāsīn to its debouchure on the main river of Gilgit. The only serious natural obstacle on this route, but that a formidable one, is presented by the glacier pass of the Darkōt. I first ascended it on May 17, 1906, from the Mastūj side, under considerable difficulties, and to a description of that visit and the photographic illustrations which accompany it I may here refer for all details. *

Owing to a curious orographic configuration two great ice-streams descend from the northern face of the Darkōt Pass. One, the Darkōt Glacier properly so called, slopes down to the north-west with an easy fall for a distance of nearly eight miles pushing its snout to the foot of the Rukang spur, where it meets the far steeper Chatiboi Glacier. The other, which on the map is shown quite as long but which reliable information represents as somewhat shorter, descends towards the north-east and ends some miles above the summer grazing ground of Showar-shur on the uppermost Yärkhun river. Thus two divergent routes offer themselves to the traveller who reaches the Darkōt Pass from the south and wishes to proceed to the Oxus.

The one keeping to the Darkōt Glacier, which I followed myself on my visit to the Darkōt Pass, has its continuation in the easy track which crosses the Rukang spur and then the Yärkhun River below it to the open valley known as Barōghil-yailak. Thence it ascends over a very gentle grassy slope to the Barōghil saddle, characteristically called *Dasht-i-Barōghil*, "the plain of Barōghil." From this point it leads down over equally easy ground, past the hamlet of Zartighar, to the Ab-i-Panja opposite

* See *Desert Oathay*, i. pp. 52 sqq. In 1913 I crossed the Darkōt from the Yāsīn side towards the close of August, i.e., at the very season when Kao Hsien-chih effected his passage. The difficulties then encountered in the deep snow of the névé beds on the top of the pass, on the great and much-crevassed glacier to the north, and on the huge side-moraines along which the descent leads, impressed me as much as before with the greatness of Kao Hsien-chih's alpine feat in taking a military force across the Darkōt.

Sarhad. The other route, after descending the glacier to the north-east of the Darköt Pass, passes down the Yärkhun River past the meadows of Showar-shur to the grazing ground of Shawitakh-yailak; thence it reaches the Hindukush watershed by an easy gradient near the lake of Shawitakh or Sarkhin-zhoe. The saddles of Barōghil and Shawitakh are separated only by about two miles of low, gently sloping hills, and at Zartighar both routes join.

The distances to be covered between the Darköt Pass and Sarhad are practically the same by both these routes, as far as the map and other available information allow me to judge. My original intention in 1906 was to examine personally those portions of both routes which lie over the *névé*-beds and glaciers of the Darköt. But the uncertain weather conditions prevailing at the time of my ascent and the exceptional difficulties then encountered owing to the early season and the heavy snowfall of that spring, effectively prevented my plan of ascending from the foot of the Rukang spur and descending to Showar-shur. In 1913 I was anxious to complete my examination of the Darköt by a descent on the latter route. But my intention was unfortunately frustrated by the fact that the passage of the glacier on the Showar-shur side had been blocked for several years past by an impracticable ice-fall which had formed at its end.

Having thus personal experience only of the north-west route I am unable to judge to what extent present conditions justify the report which represents the glacier part of the north-eastern route as somewhat easier. It is, however, a fact that the Pamir Boundary Commission of 1895, with its heavy transport of some six hundred ponies, used the latter route both coming from and returning to Gilgit. The numerous losses reported of animals and loads show that here, too, the passage of the much-crevassed glacier and the treacherous snow-covered moraines proved a very serious difficulty for the transport. Nevertheless, inasmuch as for a force coming from the Wakhān side the ascent to the Darköt Pass from the nearest practicable camping ground would be about 1,300 feet less by the Showar-shur route than by that passing the Rukang spur, I consider it probable that the former was used.

Kao Hsien-chih's biography states that it took the Chinese general three days to reach 'Mount T'an-chü,' i.e., the Darköt, but does not make it quite clear whether thereby the arrival at the north foot of the range or on its crest is meant. If the latter interpretation is assumed, with the more rapid advance it implies, it is easy to account for the time taken by a reference to the ground; for, although the Shawitakh-Barōghil saddle is crossed without any difficulty in the summer after the snow has melted, no

military force accompanied by baggage animals could accomplish the march from Sarhad across the Darköt in less than three days, the total marching distance being about thirty miles. Even a four days' march to the crest, as implied in the first interpretation would not be too large an allowance, considering the high elevations and the exceptional difficulties offered by the glacier ascent at the end.

The most striking evidence of the identity of "Mount T'an-chü" with the Darköt is supplied by the description given in the record of "the precipices for over forty *li* in a straight line" which dismayed the Chinese soldiers on looking down from the heights of Mount T'an-chü; for the slope on the southern face of the Darköt is extremely steep, as I found on my ascent in 1913 and as all previous descriptions have duly emphasized. The track, mostly over moraines and bare rock, with a crossing of a much-crevassed glacier *en route*, descends close on 5,000 feet in a distance of little more than five miles before reaching near a ruined "Darband," or *chiusa*, the nearest practicable camping ground above the small village of Darköt.

Well could I understand the reluctance shown to further advance by Kao Hsien-chih's cautious 'braves,' as from the top of the pass I looked down on May 17, 1906, through temporary rifts in the brooding vapour, into the seeming abyss of the valley. The effect was still further heightened by the wall of ice-clad mountains rising to over 20,000 feet which showed across the head of the Yäsän Valley south-eastwards, and by the contrast which the depths before me presented to the broad snowy expanse of the glacier *firn* sloping gently away on the north. Taking into account the close agreement between the Chinese record and the topography of the Darköt, we need not hesitate to recognize in *T'an-chü* an endeavour to give a phonetic rendering of some earlier form of the name *Darköt*, as accurate as the imperfections of the Chinese transcriptional devices would permit.

The stratagem by which Kao Hsien-chih met and overcame the reluctance of his troops, which threatened failure when success seemed assured, looks characteristically Chinese. The forethought shown in preparing this ruse is a proof alike of Kao Hsien-chih's judgment of men and of the extreme care with which every step of his great enterprise must have been planned. But such a ruse, to prove effective, must have remained unsuspected. I believe that in planning it full advantage was taken of the peculiar configuration of the Darköt which provides, as we have seen, a double route of access to the pass. If the party of men sent ahead to play the rôle

of the 'barbarians of Little P'o-lü' offering their submission, were despatched by the Barōghil and Rukang route, while the troops marched by the Shawitakh—Showar-shur route, all chance of discovery while on the move would be safely guarded against.

As I had often occasion to note in the course of my explorations, Chinese military activity from antiquity down to modern times has always taken advantage of the keen sense of topography widely spread in the race. So Kao Hsien-chih was likely to take full account of the alternative routes. Nor could it have been particularly difficult for him to find suitable actors, in view of the generous admixture of local auxiliaries which the Chinese forces in Central Asia have at all times comprised. *

The remaining stages of Kao Hsien-chih's advance can be traced with equal ease. The three marches which brought him from the southern foot of the pass to 'the town of A-nu-yüeh' obviously correspond to the distance, close on thirty miles, reckoned between the first camping ground below the Darkōt and the large village of Yāsīn. The latter, by its position and the abundance of cultivable ground near by, must always have been the political centre of the Yāsīn valley. Hence it is reasonable to assume that we have in *A-nu-yüeh* a fairly accurate reproduction of the name *Arniya* or *Arniak* by which the Dards of the Gilgit Valley know Yāsīn.

The best confirmation of this identification is furnished by the statement of the Chinese record that the bridge across the River So-yi was situated sixty *li* from A-nu-yüeh. Since the notice of Little P'o-lü contained in the T'ang Annals names the River So-yi as the one on which Yeh-to 叶多, the capital of the kingdom, stood, it is clear that the Gilgit River must be meant. Now a reference to the map shows that, in a descent of the valley from Yāsīn, the Gilgit River is reached at a distance of about twelve miles, which exactly agrees with the sixty *li* of the Chinese account. It is evident also that, since the only practicable route towards Gilgit proper and the Indus valley leads along the right, or southern bank, of the Gilgit River, the Tibetan reinforcements hurrying up from that direction could not reach Yāsīn without first crossing the river. This explains the importance attaching to the bridge and the prompt steps taken by the Chinese leader to have it broken. As the Gilgit River is quite unfordable in the

* The T'ang *Annals* specifically mention in the account of Shih-ni, or Shighnān, on the Oxus that its chief in A.D. 747 followed the Imperial troops in their attack on Little P'o-lü and was killed in the fighting; cf. Chavannes, *Turcs occidentaux*, p. 163.

summer the destruction of the bridge sufficed to assure safe possession of Yāsīn. *

It still remains for us to consider briefly what the biography in the T'ang Annals tells us of Kao Hsien-chih's return from Little P'o-lü. After having secured the king and his consort and pacified the whole territory, he is said to have retired by the route of 'the shrine of the red Buddha' in the eighth (Chinese) month of A.D. 747. In the ninth month (October) he rejoined the troops he had left behind at Lien-yün, i.e., Sarhad, and by the end of the same month regained 'the valley of Po-mi' or the Pāmirs.

Reference to the maps shows that there are only two direct routes, apart from that over the Darkōt and Barōghil, by which the upper Ab-i-Panja Valley can be gained from Gilgit-Yāsīn. One leads up the extremely difficult gorge of the Karambār or Ashkūman River to its headwaters east of the Yārkhun River sources, and thence by the Khora-bhort Pass over the main Hindukush range and down the Lupsuk valley to the Ab-i-Panja. This it strikes at a point close to Kārvān-balasi, half a march below the debouchure of the Little Pāmīr and two and a half marches above Sarhad. † The other, a longer but distinctly easier route, leads up from Gilgit through the Hunza valley to Guhyāl, whence the Ab-i-Panja headwaters can be gained either via the Kilik and Wakhjīr Passes or by the Chapursan valley. At the head of the latter the Irshad Pass gives access to the Lupsuk valley already mentioned, and down this Kārvān-balasi is gained on the Ab-i-Panja. ‡ All three passes are high, close on or over

* The biography of Kao Hsien-chih calls this bridge 'pont de rotin' in M. Chavannes' translation, *Turcs occidentaux*, p. 153. But there can be no doubt that what is meant is a 'rope bridge' or 'jhula,' made of twigs twisted into ropes, a mode of construction still regularly used in all the valleys between Kashmir and the Hindukush. Rope bridges of this kind across the Gilgit River near the debouchure of the Yāsīn Valley were the only permanent means of access to the latter from the south until the wire suspension bridge near the present fort of Gūpis was built in recent years.

† Regarding Kārvān-balasi and the route along the Oxus connecting Sarhad with the Little Pāmīr, cf. *Desert Cathay*, i. pp. 72 sqq.

‡ The Hunza valley route was followed by me in 1900. For a description of it and of the Kilik and Wakhjīr Passes by which it connects with the Ab-i-Panja valley close to the true glacier source of the Oxus, see my *Ruins of Khotan*, pp. 29 sqq.

The branch of this route, leading up the Chapursan Valley and across the Irshad Pass, was for the most part seen by me in 1913. The Chapursan valley is open and easy almost throughout and shows evidence of having contained a good deal of cultivation in older times; see my note in *Geographical Journal*, xlviii p. 109. On this account and in view of the fact that this route is some 18 miles shorter than that over the Wakhjīr and crosses only one watershed, it offers a distinctly more convenient line of access to the Oxus headwaters from Gilgit than the former branch.

16,000 feet, but clear of ice and comparatively easy to cross in the summer or early autumn.

Taking into account the distinct statement that Kao Hsien-chih left after the whole 'kingdom' had been pacified, it is difficult to believe that he should not have visited Gilgit, the most important portion of Little P'ö-lü. In this case the return through Hunza would have offered manifest advantages, including the passage through a tract comparatively fertile in places and not yet touched by invasion. This assumption receives support also from the long time, one month, indicated between the start on the return march and the arrival at Lien-yün. Whereas the distance from Gilgit to Sarhad via Hunza and the Irshad Pass is now counted at twenty-two marches, that from Gilgit to the same place by the Karambār River and across the Khora-bhort is reckoned at only thirteen. But the latter route is very difficult at all times and quite impracticable for load-carrying men in the summer and early autumn, when the Karambār River completely fills its narrow rock-bound gorge.

The important point is that both routes would have brought Kao Hsien-chih to the same place on the uppermost Ab-i-Panja, near Kārvān-balasi, which must be passed by all wishing to gain Sarhad from the east, whether starting from Hunza, Sarikol, or the Little Pāmīr. This leads me to believe that the "chapel of the red Buddha" 赤佛堂, already mentioned above as on the route which Kao Hsien-chih's eastern column followed on its advance to Sarhad, must be looked for in this vicinity. Now it is just here that we find the small ruin known as *Kārvān-balasi*, which has all the structural features of a Buddhist shrine though now revered as a Mohammedan tomb.* We have here probably another instance of that continuity of local cult which has so often converted places of ancient Buddhist worship in Central Asia and elsewhere into shrines of supposed Mohammedan saints. †

According to the *Annals* the victorious general repaired to the Imperial capital taking with him in triumph the captured king Su-shih-li-chih and his consort. The Emperor pardoned the captive chief and enrolled him in the Imperial guards, i.e., kept him in honourable exile, safely away from his territory. This was turned into a Chinese military district under the designation

* Regarding the ruin of Kārvān-balasi, cf. *Desert Cathay*, i. pp. 76 sqq.; *Serindia*, i. pp. 70 sqq.

† For references see *Ancient Khotan*, i. p. 811, *Serindia*, iii. p. 1548, s.v. "local worship"; also my *Note on Buddhist local worship in Mohammedan Central Asia*, *Journal of the R. Asiatic Society*, 1910, pp. 838 sqq.

of *Kuli-jên* 歸仁, and a garrison of a thousand men established there. The deep impression which Kao Hsien-chih's remarkable expedition must have produced in all neighbouring regions is duly reflected in the closing remarks of the *T'ang shu*: "Then the Fu-lin (Syria) 佛森, the Ta-shih 大食 (i.e., the Tāzi or Arabs), and seventy-two kingdoms of divers barbarian peoples were all seized with fear and made their submission."

It was the greatness of the natural obstacles overcome on Kao Hsien-chih's victorious march across the inhospitable Pāmirs and the icy Hindukush which made the fame of this last Central-Asian success of the T'ang arms spread so far. If judged by the physical difficulties encountered and vanquished, the achievement of the able Korean general deserves fully to rank by the side of the great alpine feats of commanders famous in European history. He, for the first, and perhaps the last, time led an organized army right across the Pāmirs and successfully pierced the great mountain rampart that defends Yāsīn-Gilgit, and with it the Indus valley against, invasion from the north. Respect for the energy and skill of the leader must increase with the recognition of traditional weakness which the *Annals'* unadorned account reveals in his troops.

Diplomatic documents reproduced from the Imperial archives give us an interesting glimpse of the difficult conditions under which the Chinese garrison placed in Little P'o-lü was maintained for some years after Kao Hsien-chih's great exploit. As I have had occasion to discuss this curious record fully elsewhere it will suffice to note that the small Chinese force was dependent wholly upon supplies obtained from Kashmir*, exactly as the present garrison of Indian Imperial Service troops has been ever since it was placed in Gilgit some thirty years ago. In view of such natural difficulties as even the present Kashmir-Gilgit road, an achievement of modern engineering, has not succeeded in removing, it is not surprising to find that before long resumed Tibetan aggression threatened the Chinese hold not merely upon Gilgit-Yāsīn but upon Chitrāl and distant Tokhāristān, too.

* Cf. *Ancient Khotan*, i. pp. 11 sqq.; for the official documents embodied in the *Ts'ê fu yüan kuei* (published A.D. 1013), see Chavannes, *Turcs occidentaux*, pp. 214 sq.

In the former place I have pointed out the exact parallel which the difficulties experienced since 1890 about the maintenance of an Indian Imperial garrison in Gilgit present to the conditions indicated by the Chinese record of A.D. 749. The troubles attending the transport of supplies from Kashmir necessitated the construction of the present Gilgit Road, a difficult piece of engineering.

A CHINESE EXPEDITION ACROSS THE PAMIRS

A victorious expedition undertaken by Kao Hsien-chih in A.D. 750 to Chitrāl succeeded in averting this danger. * But the fresh triumph of the Chinese arms in these distant regions was destined to be short. Early in the following year Kao Hsien-chih's high-handed intervention in the affairs of Tāshkend, far away to the north, brought about a great rising of the populations beyond the Yaxartes, who received aid from the Arabs. In a great battle fought in July, 751, in the plains near Talas, Kao Hsien-chih was completely defeated by the Arabs and their local allies and in the ensuing *débâcle* barely escaped with a small remnant of his troops. †

This disaster marked the end of all Chinese enterprise beyond the *Imaos*. In Eastern Turkestan Chinese domination succeeded in maintaining itself for some time amidst constant struggles, until by A.D. 791 the last of its administrators and garrisons, completely cut off long before from contact with the Empire, finally succumbed to Tibetan invasion. Close on a thousand years were to pass after Kao Hsien-chih's downfall before Chinese control was established once again over the Tārīm Basin and north of the T'ien-shan under the great Emperor Ch'ien-lung.

* Cf. Chavannes, *Tours occidentaux*, pp. 158, 214 sqq., 296.

† Cf. Chavannes, *ibid.*, p. 142, note 2. M. Chavannes, p. 297, quotes the closely concordant account of these events from Mohammedan historical records.

THE THOUSAND BUDDHAS OF THE TUN-HUANG CAVES.

BY

HARRISON K. WRIGHT, M.A.

In the spring of 1906, Sir Aurel Stein set forth on the second of his explorations of Central Asia. A little over a year later he arrived at Tun-huang, a hsien city not far from the border of north-west Kansu Province, purposing to visit the famous caves of the Thousand Buddhas, which are located a few miles to the south-east of the town. Before doing so, he learned of the existence of a store of Buddhist manuscripts which had been recently discovered in a walled-up section of one of the caves. Naturally he was eager for a sight of them, and took care, on visiting the site, to cultivate the Taoist bonze who was in charge of the treasure trove. Managing thus to gain entrance to the cave, he found a stupendous task—for there were thousands of manuscripts to be looked over. Only a cursory examination was possible, but presently something better than Buddhist classics in Chinese and Central Asian languages came to light, in the form of a series of Buddhist paintings, chiefly on silk, of the T'ang period, and evidently of the highest importance for the study of the history of Buddhist art. The bonze in charge fortunately prized the paintings less than the manuscripts, and by a judicious mixture of wheedling and of argument (in both of which Sir Aurel's Chinese assistant took a chief part), and of remuneration, almost the entire collection of paintings was acquired, together with a selection of manuscripts. Toilsomely the whole was transported through the deserts back to India, and later arrived safely in England, where it required seven years of labour in the British Museum to clean and remount the paintings alone; for they had been badly crushed in the long years of hiding, and only the extreme dryness of the climate had permitted the colours to remain at all. The

Elgin marbles were appropriated. The Peking astronomical instruments were looted, and as loot the guilty nation was compelled to return them; but the Tun-huang paintings and manuscripts were rescued from almost certain destruction and preserved with care; and now a selection of the artistically important paintings is reproduced, half of them in colour, for the use of students everywhere. Not having seen the originals, we cannot speak of the success of the reproduction by photography and three-colour process, but the attraction of the reproductions themselves is so great that we must believe they are as nearly successful as it was possible to be, and we can hardly be too thankful that at last, fifteen years after their discovery, they are available for all who are interested in Buddhist and East Asian art.

In his "Ruins of Desert Cathay," Sir Aurel gave a popular and personal account of his expedition, and in his "Serindia" appears his detailed report, in the production of which he is assisted by several experts. The present work was projected because of limitations, chiefly of size, in the detailed report, and is largely devoted to the exposition of the pictures from the artistic side; but so closely is this bound up with the archæological and iconographic sides which are treated more at length in the detailed report, that it is almost necessary to have a copy of "Serindia" for reference, if one is to get the full benefit of the work. But not only that; Sir Aurel presupposes in the reader an acquaintance with the principal work already done by students in this field, and without such an acquaintance it will hardly be possible to follow the explanations in many cases. In particular, one needs to have absorbed much of the results of the brilliant and interesting labour of M. Foucher, in his "Étude sur l'Iconographie Bouddhique de l'Inde" and his "Beginnings of Buddhist Art." For the student thus prepared the pictures take on added meaning at every turn. And it will be found, moreover, that a mastery of them, with Sir Aurel's text, will be of great assistance to the appreciation of the reproduction of the frescoes on the walls of the caves of the Thousand Buddhas; a work that is appearing now, as the result of the labours of the French expedition led by Professor Paul Pelliot, which was able to acquire many of the manuscripts and all of the paintings left by Sir Aurel, and to photograph the frescoes in the caves. The remainder of the manuscripts have been sent to Peking by official order, many being "lost" on the way. We can guess what might have happened to the paintings, if Peking had sent for them.

The introductory essay by Laurence Binyon discusses in illuminating fashion the art of the T'ang dynasty, and the artistic

THE THOUSAND BUDDHAS OF THE TUN-HUANG CAVES

meaning of the Tun-huang paintings, and furnishes just the link needed between the work of M. Foucher, and the descriptive text of Sir Aurel. The former has prepared us to realize that strange marvel, that Greek models should be transmitted through the Buddhist art of ancient Gandhara, in north-west India, to China, so that Chinese artists should actually be influenced by Greek achievements, and wed their art to the art whose home is Athens. Surely it is not wholly due to religious considerations that they did so; surely they recognized beauty and took it to themselves for the very love of beauty. No religion is able to flourish long unless it cultivates the beautiful as well as the true and the good; and no more striking evidence of the right of Buddhism to the title of a world religion can be adduced than the fact that her devoted artists recognized the superb beauty of Greek models, and adopted them, while yet maintaining their own individuality, which marks even the most "Indian" of the Tun-huang paintings, and proves that Chinese artists were worthy of the goodly company of Greece and Gandhara. For even a tyro in art criticism can, with a little guidance, recognize the Greek touch, and distinguish the Chinese from the Gandharan style.

As one studies the pictures the sense grows within one of entering into the inner sanctuary of the religious consciousness of men whose feelings were sincere, delicate and broadly human. Indeed, it was a vivid, rich world in which the Buddhist of these paintings lived. If any one will first read the translation by Madame Chavannes in the present number of the *Review*, which deals with the Tun-huang region, and then study the paintings carefully, under Sir Aurel's guidance, he will get some idea of how the artists people the bleak desert with the kindly creatures of their imagination, as well as the terrible ones;—that desert which was still alive with the ghosts of those who gave their lives to the building of the Great Wall. These benevolent and beautiful and powerful and sometimes fantastic and frightful creatures and scenes from the Buddhist Scriptures were immortalized on silk, mocking the cruel winds and the savage forays, and giving colour and value to life. What a host is here of Buddhas, of Bodhisattvas great and small, and of their disciples, of Guardian Kings, and Garudas and demons, of dancers and musicians and souls new born into Paradise, of flowers and jewels and gorgeous apparel! Vigorous action and ineffable rest are alike represented, and the worshipper is bid to be of good cheer, for in the world to come is fullness of joy. Truly, the undevout student of Buddhist art must be mad.

Christian art has not yet made much impression in China. It is true that art itself as compared with what it was in the T'ang period is now either decadent or non-existent. But with the Chinese renaissance there is sure to be a new artistic period. The Christian church is taking account of the renaissance in other spheres, and she will do well not to neglect the possible influence of Christian art on the new China. It is an interesting fact to note, in this connection, that just as the earlier Chinese artists portrayed Gautama as though he were pure Chinese (in the scenes representing Jataka legends) so have native Christian artists treated the figure of Christ.

Coming now to the individual pictures and the description of them by Sir Aurel, we note that the identification of the figures was entrusted to a colleague, M. Raphael Petrucci, who in addition to an acquaintance with Buddhist art, was well grounded in sinology. Unhappily, M. Petrucci was not spared to complete his labours, and we have to mourn his loss, together with that of another collaborator, M. Chavannes. The description of the pictures suffers in consequence, and we hope that the *lacunae* can be made good in a future edition. A detailed examination of so rich a store is impossible in a review, but a few general remarks, together with a few details, may be in order. Of the subjects selected for representation, we note that Avalokitesvara appears most frequently, and there is as yet no suggestion that he is other than male. Indeed, in one of the paintings (Plate xvii) there appears the Indian goddess Hariti (in a position subordinate to Avalokitesvara), whom M. Foucher calls the Buddhist Madonna. One cannot but wonder what part she may have played in turning the Indian male god into the Chinese goddess of mercy, the truly Chinese Buddhist Madonna whom we know. It is a problem that still puzzles us; but just as the Tun-huang paintings have helped to clear up the question of the origins of the Buddhist art of Japan, so there may lie buried somewhere in this great land, waiting for the explorer's spade, the evidence that shall clear up the connection between Avalokitesvara and Kwan-yin. But the Bodhisattva who incarnates mercy is not alone; we find as well Ksitigarbha and the Buddhas Amitabha, Maitreya, and Bhaisajjaraja (otherwise Bhaisajyaguru), the King or the Sage of Medicine. The latter, of whom Eitel's *Handbook* appears to be quite innocent, and who is barely mentioned by Sir Charles Eliot, in his great work, is the chief subject of two of the finest paintings of all, represented in the first three plates. We recommend the careful study of these to any who desire a sympathetic understanding of the soul of Chinese Buddhism at its best

Mr. Binyon speaks warm words of appreciation, and he does not overstate the case.

Aside from Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the vigorous figures of the Lokapalas, or Guardians of the Four Quarters, are favourites for treatment. They provide the proper foil to the dreamily restful spirits. It shows the essentially healthy character of the artists that they could perceive that men do not always wish to be "carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease." Of course this healthiness has its roots in the whole Mahayana revolt against the narrow ideals of the Hinayana teachings, but it draws fresh life from the vigour of the soul of the Chinese artist.

In the hope of sending the reader to drink at the fountain itself, we venture a brief description of one of the reproductions, the Paradise of Bhaisajyaguru, presented in Plates i and ii. The painting is in the Indian manner, somewhat crowded and lacking the fine spacing which the Chinese style employs. The Buddha sits in the center, flanked by the Bodhisattvas Manjusri and Samantabhadra (representing Wisdom and Power). These in turn are flanked by numerous minor Bodhisattvas, all distinguished by haloes, and by Guardian Kings and demons. On a platform below is a woman dancer, accompanied by eight musicians and two child dancers. Twelve Dharmapalas, Guardians of the Law, are disposed in the bottom corners. A Garuda (half bird, half woman) is just below the dancer's platform, and in the lotus lake are flowers supporting souls newborn. The colours are glowing and varied, but it is the variety of expression in the faces that deserves the most careful study. As Mr. Binyon says, "We are taken into an atmosphere of strange peace, which yet seems filled with buoyant motion, and floating strains of music."

We think that one of the pictures that will most repay study is Plate xvii, though artistically, it may not stand in the highest rank. The decorative effect is especially rich. Avalokitesvara appears in his eleven-headed, thousand-armed form, but the effect is not repulsive as it is so apt to be in a Chinese modern temple. The presence of the Indian deities Indra and Brahman is noteworthy. Below them appear two Sivaitic deities, but Sir Aurel has them in the wrong order in his description. The Chinese in the cartouches says quite plainly that it is Mahesvara 摩醯守羅 on the right (on Siva's bull) and Mahakaia 摩訶迦羅 on the left. The Chinese of the first title is somewhat unusual, for it does not appear in this form in the 佛學大辭典; the 摩 being there changed to 摩.

In this connection it may be as well to call attention to two other small errors in the descriptive text, both of them doubtless

due, as was the first, to absence of needed help from the sinological side. The first is in Plate xii which represents "Scenes from Gautama Buddha's Life." Of the first scene the text says, "We see the prince riding out of the green-tiled gateway of the battlemented courtyard of his father's palace," and of the second scene, "We see the prince riding with bent head from the same palace gateway." But the Chinese inscription in the cartouches reads, of the first scene, "The prince goes out of the east gate of the city" 太子出城東門; and of the second, "The prince goes out of the south gate of the city." 太子出城南門. In both cases a Chinese city wall is quite visible.

Again at the end of the description of Plate xx, we read, "The Chinese inscription in the left top corner describes the painting as the gift of a son in memory of his father." As a matter of fact, it is a daughter, and not a son, who makes the gift. One of the characters is a little blurred, but the whole is clear enough, and reads, "(From) the ninth daughter, in token of eternal service," 女弟子九娘永爲供養. These, however, are very tiny spots on the sun.

Among the uncoloured illustrations, one of the more interesting is Plate xvi. The combination and contrast of Indian and Chinese treatment is very marked, and a special opportunity for study rises from the fact that the figures of Avalokitesvara in the upper half are mainly Indian, while those of Samantabhadra and Manjusri in the lower half are mainly Chinese (witness also the legs of the elephant!). The pictures of the donors at the bottom bear a date, reminding us of the happy custom of the Chinese to be exact in these matters, as the Indian artists were not. In many of the pictures where no date is affixed, it is possible to guess it approximately from the style of dress worn by the donors. The two Bodhisattvas give respectively the "gesture" (derived from India, and more commonly preserved in Lama temples than in those purely Chinese) of argumentation, and of adoration. According to M. Foucher, there are nine "gestures"; they are like the leit-motifs in Wagner, perceptible signs for the conveyance of general ideas. One or another of these gestures appears in most of the pictures.

Plate xi contains the feature of souls as babes in lotus buds, floating on the lake of the Western Paradise and waiting for the buds to open, so that they may be born into the Paradise. Plates vi and vii represent the Paradise of the historical Buddha, Sakyamuni, and are full of the most attractive and absorbing detail. Plate xiv has special iconographic interest. It represents historic statues of Sakyamuni, known to have existed in various parts

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of India ; in particular one which the Chinese pilgrim Hsūan Tsang saw at Bodh-gaya, the spot assigned by tradition as the scene of the historic Buddha's attainment of enlightenment.

Among the smaller plates, the most noteworthy is No. xxxiv, which reproduces on a scale of one-tenth only and so cannot do justice to the original ; it is a reduction of a large embroidery picture representing Sakyamuni on the Vulture Peak, and is one of the most important of the Tun-huang finds. It is wonderful to think of these colours, which glow as if in a Botticelli painting, surviving the chances of centuries, crushed in a dark cave under a heavy burden of paper, and now brought to the light and stitched by a skilful needlewoman on a new canvas backing, so that they may be preserved indefinitely. The principal subjects of the other small plates are Bhaisajyaguru, the Buddha legend, Ksitigarbha, Avalokitesvara, and the Lokapalas.

Our brief tale is told. We turn from a visit to this strange and beautiful world constructed from the materials of the faith once delivered to Buddhist saints, with feelings akin to those of Aeneas or Dante returning to the earth. We have been in fairy-land, and while we may not accept its details as authentic, its spirit lifts our spirits to a place where we breathe freely in a pure and bracing atmosphere. All this we owe to the intelligence, courage, patience and devotion of Sir Aurel Stein, and his colleagues great and small. *Finis coronat opus* ; the labour of the recovery of these treasures was worthy of the labour that produced them. Long may the gallant explorer live to receive the congratulations and thanks he so richly deserves, and to gain fresh laurels in his chosen field.

