

FAREWELL DINNER

On April 29th I had invited Governor-General YANG, FAN, LIU and several other guests of honour who had been of help to us, as well as the gentlemen on the staff of the Russian consulate-general, to a farewell dinner in the big commemoration hall in the public gardens.

Urumchi's *jardin publique* is one of Governor YANG's works, and was projected not only for the pleasure of the people but also for his own glorification. In a grove of magnificent trees is the private section of the park, situated on the banks of the little river that flows along the western side of the town. The main building has been designed in the bizarre Chinese style, while other houses had here and there a Russian touch. The big halls and reception-rooms are situated one flight up and give on to a balcony or gallery on wooden columns. The actual commemoration hall is a room at one long side of which one finds a Chinese altar with all the usual decorations and sacrificial objects, and a painted life-size portrait of YANG in full uniform, figuring as an altar-picture. It is as if he were already dead. Doubtless he had this curious temple erected in order to commemorate himself and his work in Sinkiang. On the open space before the façade there is also in a little open pavilion a richly gilded statue of YANG.¹

Just opposite the entrance to the main building on an island one finds a pavilion whose roof is supported on red wooden columns and from the balustrade of which one has a splendid view of a pond surrounded by leafy trees. It is called The Pavilion of the Mirror-Lake.

This was where our guests were to foregather. Punctuality is scarcely a Chinese virtue. They were invited for one o'clock, and a few minutes before the hour SUI and I were on the spot. Hardly had we mounted the platform of the pavilion before the sirens of YANG's car were heard and the flame-coloured mounted guard came galloping up to form two files between the pavilion and the main building. We hurried down to meet the ruler of Sinkiang. And we sat talking in the summer-house for a good hour before the other guests put in an appearance.

When all had arrived I conducted YANG to the upper room, where three round tables were laid. Only Chinese dishes were served. Everyone was in high spirits. In my speech to YANG I thanked him for the time during which we had been his guests in Urumchi and expressed my happiness at the circumstance that our impending separation would only last for three months. He wound up his reply with a »welcome back!«

In the course of the meal YANG asked me during my visit to Sweden to buy for his account ten motor-cars of a make that would be suitable for the Sinkiang roads.

¹ The collection of funds for the erection of this monument in the Public Garden was conducted throughout the whole district by forced subscriptions. And as a gift »from the grateful population« appeared this ugly copper figure with gilded epaulettes and stars. NICHOLAS ROERICH in »Altai — Himalya«. F. B.