

ante, pp. li, xciii), and of the interview which he had there with the emperor, who must have been Hitsung of the Thang, very shortly before the great rebellion broke out. The story of the interview is too long to extract; but there does not seem to be any sufficient reason to doubt its correctness, and we may gather from it further proof that the knowledge of the Chinese in the days of the Thang was by no means confined to that circle of oblique-eyed humanity which we are accustomed to regard as the limit of Chinese ideas. Ibn Wahab describes Khumdan or Changgan, which was two months' journey from Khanfu, as divided in two by a long and wide street. The city eastward of this was entirely devoted to the residences of the emperor and officers of Government. On the west side were the shops, places of business, and the miscellaneous population. The streets were traversed with channels of running water and bordered with trees.

Abu Zaid, like his predecessor, dwells upon the orderly and upright administration of China whilst in its normal state. This indeed seems to have made a strong impression at all times on the other nations of Asia, and we trace this impression in almost every account that has reached us from Theophylactus downwards,¹ whilst it is also probably the kernel of those praises of the justice of the Seres which extend back some centuries further into antiquity.

He is acquainted with the general character of the overland communication between Sogdiana and China Proper. The frontier of the latter was a two months' journey distant, over a country which was almost a waterless desert, though the frontier of the *empire* was not far from Khorasan. The difficulty of passing this desert had alone prevented the Musulman warriors of Khorasan from attempting the invasion of China. A friend of the author told him, however, that he had seen at Khanfu a man with a bagful of musk on his back whom he found to have come on foot all the way from Samarkand.²

¹ The Jesuit historian Jarric thinks that "if Plato were to rise from Hades he would declare that his imagined Republic was realised in China" (ii, 676).

² i, p. 114.