

He mentions that three of the chief officers of state were called the Master of the Right, the Master of the Left, and the Master of the Centre. I do not know if traces of these appellations still exist in the Chinese administration; but we find that under Kublai Khan the two chief ministers of state bore the titles of "Minister of the Right, and Minister of the Left".¹

83. We have some account of China from an Arab geographer who was contemporary with the earlier of the two compilers of the *Relations*, and wrote perhaps a few years later than the date assigned by Abu Zaid to the work of his predecessor. This was Abul Kasim 'Ubaid Allah called Ibn Khurdádbah, born about 820-830, and who served under the Khalif Mutammid (869-885) as director of the posts in Jibal or the ancient Media. This work, "The Book of Routes and Provinces," in great part consists only of lists of stages and distances, but there are occasionally some descriptive details introduced. The following lines contain nearly all that he says of China:²

"From SANF (Champa) to AL-WAKÍN,³ which is the first port of China, is one hundred farsangs either by sea or by land. Here you find excellent Chinese iron, porcelain, and rice. You can go from Al Wakin, which is a great port, to KHANFU in four days by sea, or in twenty days by land. Khanfu produces all sorts of fruits and vegetables, wheat, barley, rice, and sugar-cane. From Khanfu you arrive in eight days at JANFU, which has the same

¹ See *Pauthier's Polo*, p. 329. In the case of Lord Amherst's Embassy the three members of the Legation were distinguished by the Chinese as *the Middle* or Principal, the *Left Hand* (which is the more honourable side), and the *Right Hand* Envoys (*Davis's Chinese*, Supp. vol., p. 40). In our Mission to Ava in 1855 the Envoy's secretary was termed by the Burmese "the Right Hand Officer."

² From a translation by M. Barbier de Meynard in the *Journal Asiatique*, ser. vi, tom. v (see pp. 292-294).

³ The *Lúkin* of Edrisi (v. §85) who has derived several passages from Ibn Khurdadbah. One would suppose it to be Canton, had not Ibn Batuta identified Canton with Sin-ul-Sin, which Edrisi describes quite distinctly from Lukin. Edrisi, however, had no distinct ideas about Eastern Asia, and this is not conclusive. This Lukin cannot of course be the *Lukinfu* of Rashid (p. 268 *infra*), but it may have something to do with the alternative name (apparently corrupt) of *Lumkali* applied in the same page to Canton.