

case, however, that the author of the Book of the Estate of the Great Kaan (*circa* 1330) also speaks of cremation as the usual Chinese practice, and that Ibn Batuta says positively: "The Chinese are infidels and idolaters, and they burn their dead after the manner of the Hindus." This is all the more curious, because the Arab *Relations* of the 9th century say distinctly that the Chinese bury their dead, though they often kept the body long (as they do still) before burial; and there is no mistaking the description which Conti (15th century) gives of the Chinese mode of sepulture. Mendoza, in the 16th century, alludes to no disposal of the dead except by burial, but Semedo in the early part of the 17th says that bodies were occasionally burnt, especially in Sze-ch'wan.

I am greatly indebted to the kindness of an eminent Chinese scholar, Mr. W. F. Mayers, of Her Majesty's Legation at Peking, who, in a letter, dated Peking, 18th September, 1874, sends me the following memorandum on the subject:—

"Colonel Yule's *Marco Polo*, II. 97 [First Edition], *Burning of the Dead*.

"On this subject compare the article entitled *Huo Tsang*, or 'Cremation Burials,' in Bk. XV of the *Jih Che Luh*, or 'Daily Jottings,' a great collection of miscellaneous notes on classical, historical, and antiquarian subjects, by Ku Yen-wu, a celebrated author of the 17th century. The article is as follows:—

"The practice of burning the dead flourished (or flourishes) most extensively in Kiang-nan, and was in vogue already in the period of the Sung Dynasty. According to the history of the Sung Dynasty, in the 27th year of the reign Shao-hing (A.D. 1157), the practice was animadverted upon by a public official.' Here follows a long extract, in which the burning of the dead is reprehended, and it is stated that cemeteries were set apart by Government on behalf of the poorer classes.

"In A.D. 1261, Hwang Chên, governor of the district of Wu, in a memorial praying that the erection of cremation furnaces might thenceforth be prohibited, dwelt upon the impropriety of burning the remains of the deceased, for whose obsequies a multitude of observances were prescribed by the religious rites. He further exposed the fallacy of the excuse alleged for the practice, to wit, that burning the dead was a fulfilment of the precepts of Buddha, and accused the priests of a certain monastery of converting into a source of illicit gain the practice of cremation."

[As an illustration of the cremation of a Buddhist priest, I note the following passage from an article published in the *North-China Herald*, 20th May, 1887, p. 556, on Kwei Hua Ch'eng, Mongolia: "Several Lamas are on visiting terms with me and they are very friendly. There are seven large and eight small Lamaseries, in care of from ten to two hundred Lamas. The principal Lamas at death are cremated. A short time ago, a friendly Lama took me to see a cremation. The furnace was roughly made of mud bricks, with four fire-holes at the base, with an opening in which to place the body. The whole was about 6 feet high, and about 5 feet in circumference. Greased fuel was arranged within and covered with glazed foreign calico, on which were written some Tibetan characters. A tent was erected and mats arranged for the Lamas. About 11.30 A.M. a scarlet covered bier appeared in sight carried by thirty-two beggars. A box 2 feet square and 2½ feet high was taken out and placed near the furnace. The Lamas arrived and attired themselves in gorgeous robes and sat cross-legged. During the preparations to chant, some butter was being melted in a corner of the tent. A screen of calico was drawn round the furnace in which the cremator placed the body, and filled up the opening. Then a dozen Lamas began chanting the burial litany in Tibetan in deep bass voices. Then the head priest blessed the torches and when the fires were lit he blessed a fan to fan the flames, and lastly some melted butter, which was poured in at the top to make the whole blaze. This was frequently repeated. When fairly ablaze, a few pieces of Tibetan grass were thrown in at the top. After three days the whole cooled, and a priest with one gold and one silver chopstick collects the bones, which are placed in a bag for burial. If the bones are white it is a sign that his sin is purged, if black that perfection has not been attained."—H. C.]

And it is very worthy of note that the Chinese envoy to Chinla (Kamboja) in 1295,