

SECTION II.—FROM CH'IAO-WAN-CH'ÉNG TO SHIH-ËRH-TUN

Fortified
town in
ruins.

We had already, some miles before reaching T. xli. h, come in sight of the ruined walls and temples of a fortified small town or *ch'êng* 城 standing by the river, which in 1907 had attracted my notice from afar, as I passed along the high road between San-tao-kou and Bulungir. Its name had been then given as *Ch'iao-wan-ch'êng*; the local name, as now actually recorded on the spot, was P'êng-chia-chuang 彭家庄.¹ But as this seemed to apply rather to an isolated habitation outside, which was still tenanted by some priests and also served as shelter for occasional caravans, than to the ruined town, it may be convenient to retain the appellation *Ch'iao-wan-ch'êng* as more appropriate to the latter.

Enclosing
walls.

The small well-built fortress was an impressive sight, and though I knew that its abandonment dated only from the great Tungan rebellion of the early sixties of the last century, the observations made on inspecting its ruins proved distinctly instructive. The little town, which was said to have been tenanted by a Chinese garrison up to its destruction, is enclosed by massive walls of stamped clay. These form a rectangle, as the sketch-plan in Pl. 15 shows, about 380 yards by 135 and approximately orientated. The southern wall rises within a hundred yards of the right bank of the river.² A large gate vaulted in hard brickwork leads through the wall on the south and another through that on the north, in each case protected by a square outwork which is entered through a similar gate.

Streets
lined by
ruins.

The impression received on passing into the interior from the river-side was that of a Roman *castrum* translated into its nearest Chinese equivalent (Fig. 217). A broad and perfectly straight street, lined by houses of fairly solid construction but all reduced to the condition of roofless ruins, leads from either gate right across to the wall on the opposite side. In their centre these two streets are crossed at right angles by a third one stretching along the longitudinal axis of the rectangle. At the end of the street leading from the southern gate I found a decayed temple retaining much-battered statues of a Buddha and Lokapālas. Two ruined houses near it proved to be tenanted by some monks, the only inhabitants of this solitude. Survival of local worship accounted for their presence and for the partial preservation of the shrine. The Ya-mên at the end of the other street had been stripped of whatever could be of any possible use, and of its past dignity retained only two quaint lions in stone guarding its entrance.

Time of
construc-
tion.

The gates were once surmounted by ornamental pavilions, as were also the corner towers of the circumvallation. These superstructures have crumbled into almost complete ruin; but many fragments of the tasteful brick relievos which had served for their ornamentation still survived, whether *in situ* or built into little shrines recently restored. The whole of the remains within the ruined *ch'êng* suggested that its structures had been systematically planned and built at one time. This was evidently done under a régime which could assure effective completion even on these distant outskirts of the Empire. No information was obtainable from the ignorant 'Ho-shangs' as to the epoch when the town was constructed. But judging from its position far beyond the 'Great Wall' of Ming times and from the style of the decorative relievos of which a few specimens are described in the List below and illustrated in Pl. L, it can scarcely be doubted that this fortified frontier station owed its creation to the spacious times of the first Manchu Emperors, from K'ang-hsi to Ch'ien-lung.

¹ The spelling *P'êng-chia-chiang* of Map No. 40. B. 4 is due to a draughtsman's error.

² On Map No. 40. B. 4 the town symbol has been placed

too far from the river, entailing a similar draughtsman's error in the position of the Limes *agger* north of it.