

eastwards into Tibet. The purpose of my journey, however, being still unfulfilled, I had to rearrange my plans. I resolved to spend the summer months in Tibet, and I clung to the hope of being able to explore the unknown stretch of the Yarkand River, when it would be frozen over in the coldest weeks of the following winter. It was still too early in the season to start for Tibet, and Macartney suggested that I should make a short excursion into the Takla Makan Desert. He was acquainted with a man named Islam Akun, who had often sold him books purporting to be ancient and to have been found in the Takla Makan. My friend was not the only purchaser of these books, for Petrovsky and nearly all European travellers in the region had been induced to buy them. The man professed to be acquainted with buried cities in that desert, and he agreed that, acting as my guide, he should receive no payment until he had brought me to at least one buried city not previously visited by any European.

During the visit of Macartney and Father Hendriks to Yarkand, Mr. Backlând received interesting information concerning the manufacture of ancient Kotan manuscripts, his informant being a boy, the servant of Dr. Josef Messrur, a Persian missionary. This youth, while at Khotan the year before, had struck up a warm friendship with another boy, the son of an enterprising producer of ancient manuscripts, and the information which reached the Swedish missionary through these lads was probably true in substance.* According to the statement of the boy, the books consist of pages printed from blocks of pear-tree wood, many of the characters used being from genuine old documents. After being printed the pages are hung up in chimneys until they assume the required old look, and are then fastened together in books

* See "A Report on the British Collection of Antiquities from Central Asia," by A. F. Rudolf Hoernle, C.T., Ph.D. (Tübingen).