

been made simply and solely for official purposes, and it was plainly the official desire that the system should not be extended. The post does, in fact, carry private letters, but these must be enclosed in official envelopes, which can only be procured at the Yamens by friends of the persons there employed. Among the people I saw no sign of any demand for postal facilities. Neither to Chinese nor to natives was time of much consequence, and probably most persons preferred to use their own animals, or to hire carts, rather than to employ fresh horses at regular intervals. The official post exists only on the roads from Kashgar to Urumtsi and from Kashgar to Yarkand, Khotan, and some other towns beyond. The service is irregular and slow. Though the letters are carried on horseback the time taken, as shown in the case of my own letters sent by official courtesy, exceeds that required by a man travelling on foot. A letter sent by the Chow-Kuan of Khotan to Yarkand, a distance of some 230 miles, was ten days *en route*, though on the road there were eight post stations where men and animals were supposed to be always ready. I travelled with a caravan over the same road in the same time. The speed with which letters are to be carried is marked on the envelopes. In cases of urgency they are marked to be carried at the rate of 400 lis a day; and if they are carried at a slower rate the persons who have caused the delay are severely punished.

Telegraph messages from Peking (pronounced Bējin, in Sin-Chiang) to Kashgar take from one to three days in transit. They can be sent either in the Chinese language or in any European language written in Roman characters. If a message in any other language, for example, that of the natives of Sin-Chiang has to be sent, it is first translated into Chinese. Owing to the impossibility of signalling the 4,000 Chinese characters, each of them is