sword at his disposal. This was the young general Ho Ch'ü-ping, whose illustrious name has never faded in the historical books of the Chinese. In a three year campaign, between 121 and 119 B. C., he wrested north-western Kansu from the Huns.

In order to make the exposed Kansu corridor secure against the inroads of the nomads, very extensive fortifications were constructed. The Great Wall was extended to a point north-west of Tun-huang. Several military garrisons were founded, and along the Edsen-gol[1] valley, which afforded the easiest approach for attack from the north, the Chinese caused the building of walls, signal towers and fortresses, and these were also garrisoned. This was the district of Chü-yen where I was fortunate enough to discover, in 1930—31, a large number of Han records on wood.

What had been a road of invasion for the Huns since the expulsion of the Yüeh-chih now became a road of expansion for the Chinese.

Though China still had to suffer from Hsiung-nu inroads during several centuries, it was this strong and active anti-Hun policy of Emperor Wu which started the downfall of the Hsiung-nu power in Asia.

Chang Ch'ien's mission to Central Asia has received its due credit from all students dealing with the early inter-relation between China and the West. When this famous ambassador returned from his eventful journey to the Chinese capital in B. C. 126 or 125 he was full of surprising news about rich foreign countries in the west, whose existence had until then been unknown to the Chinese. A whole new world now lay open to the powerful Emperor Wu. After this the fighting down of the Huns was not only a question of pacifying the frontiers. It acquired a deeper significance. Until then the frontiers had for the Chinese represented the end of the civilized world. But Chang Ch'ien's report spoke of many rich countries behind the fringe of barbaric tribes surrounding China, and the hope of opening relations with these far off countries accelerated the campaign against the Huns.

Especially the tales of the 'blood-sweating' horses of Ferghana seem to have aroused the particular curiosity of Emperor Wu, and he did not hesitate to dispatch two very expensive military expeditions across the vast distances of Central Asia with the sole object (at least so it is said) of bringing back those famous steeds. By means of equipping his cavalry with superior horses the Emperor hoped to beat the Hsiung-nu nomads at their own tactics. After the success of the second expedition to Ferghana the prestige of the Chinese was firmly established along the routes through Central Asia, and it was followed by a remarkable development of trade. The quest of the strange, coupled with mercantile interests, drew Chinese

[1] Following Mr. Unkrig's suggestion, I use this new spelling for the river name usually written Etsin-gol or Edsin-gol. The true literary form is Edsen-gool. The local pronunciation of the first part varies between Edsine, Echine and Ejine.