

priest's insecure keeping. Nearly a year later the caves of the 'Thousand Buddhas' were visited by that distinguished French savant, Professor P. Pelliot. Aided by his exceptional command of Sinologue knowledge, he induced Wang Tao-shih to allow him to effect a rapid scrutiny of the remaining masses of Chinese rolls. In the course of this strenuous labour he was able to pick out such non-Chinese manuscript remains as had got mixed up with them as well as to select those Chinese texts which he recognized as of philological, antiquarian or other special interest. The priest, evidently reassured by his previous transaction with me, allowed Professor Pelliot to acquire a considerable portion of the 15,000-odd manuscript texts and fragments thus examined.

During the great French savant's stay at Peking in 1909, on his way back to Paris, the news of the important Chinese manuscripts brought away by him excited much interest among Chinese scholars of the capital. So before long an order was issued by the central government directing the prompt transmission of the whole library to the capital. The information I received when regaining Tun-huang in 1914 on my third expedition left unfortunately little doubt as to the sad but characteristic manner in which this order from headquarters had been carried out.

According to Wang Tao-shih, who then hastened to welcome me back as an old and cherished patron, the large sum of money assigned in compensation to his temple had completely vanished *en route*, being duly absorbed in transit through the various offices. The whole collection of manuscripts was taken away in carts, packed in a very perfunctory manner. A good deal of pilfering occurred while the