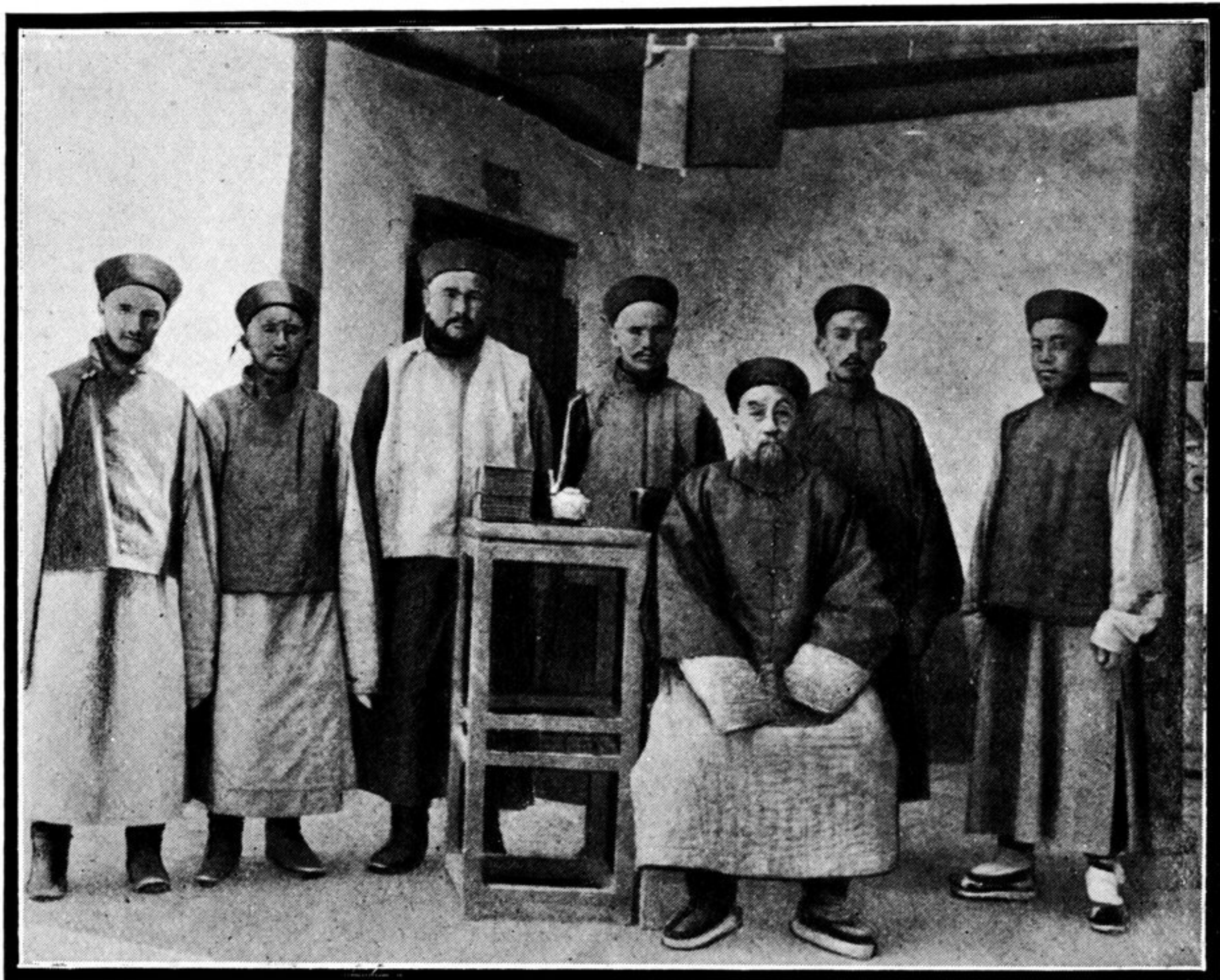


guest, and when informed of the object of my search readily offered me the use of his residence. I had disturbed him in the reading of a Turki version of Firdusi's *Shahnama*. My acquaintance with the original of the great Persian epic seemed to win for me at once the goodwill of my impromptu host, and I hesitated the less about accepting his offer. So



PAN-DARIN, AMBAN OF KHOTAN, WITH PERSONAL ATTENDANTS.

when next morning my tent was pitched on the lawn in front of a shady clump of trees, I again enjoyed the peace and seclusion of a country residence.

At noon I paid my first visit to Pan-Darin, the Amban, after the usual preliminaries required by Chinese etiquette. I found him a quiet, elderly man, with features that seemed to betoken thoughtfulness and honesty of purpose. His kindly