

within a few years, for a similar decree in favour of his wife is recorded for the year 740<sup>37</sup>. Of Wei-ch'ih Kuei's son and successor Shêng we possess somewhat fuller data, a special biography being devoted to him in the T'ang Annals<sup>38</sup>. We learn from them that during the period T'ien-pao (742-755 A. D.) this Khotan ruler came to present offerings to the emperor and received from him an imperial princess in marriage. After returning to his territory he helped Kao Hsien-chih to attack and vanquish Sa-pi-po-hsien. In the latter M. Chavannes has recognized with good reason the chief of Little P'o-lü or Gilgit-Yasîn, against whom, as we have already seen, Kao Hsien-chih directed his famous campaign across the Pāmirs in 747 A. D.<sup>39</sup>. In the latter year, as well as in 748, embassies from Khotan with presents for the imperial court are recorded<sup>40</sup>. Shêng testified his attachment to the imperial house still further by leaving, in 756, his territory in order to support with five thousand horse the emperor Su tsung in his desperate struggle against the pretender An Lu-shan. Shih-hu (Jabgu) Yao, his younger brother, to whom he had entrusted the charge of his state, was in 760 appointed second in command of the 'Four Garrisons', with the task of carrying on the government of the Khotan kingdom.

Shêng himself died in China, while his brother was still ruling, about 786, when Wu-k'ung passed through Khotan. The pilgrim's itinerary duly mentions him by the name of Wei-ch'ih Yao, and by his side the deputy-governor Chêng Chü, evidently a Chinese official<sup>41</sup>. The special interest of Wu-k'ung's notice lies in the fact that it relates to the very close of the period of T'ang dominion in Eastern Turkestan. When sketching the history of this dominion in chapter III, we have already seen how the advance of the Tibetans east of the Tārīm Basin had, during the last third of the eighth century, rendered more and more difficult the maintenance of Chinese authority by the officials and troops left behind in the 'Four Garrisons'<sup>42</sup>.

Wu-k'ung's record and the Chinese documents brought to light from the ruins of Dandān-Uiliq, bearing dates from 768-790 A. D., afford valuable testimony to the fact that Chinese administrative influence made itself felt at Khotan to within a year of the date (790-791) when all connexion between the empire and the 'Four Garrisons' was finally broken by the Tibetan occupation of Pei-t'ing (Bēshbalik). We know that the direct route between the southern oases of the Tārīm Basin and Kan-su had become closed long before through the advance of the Tibetans. A sidelight is thrown on the resulting insecurity of communication by a curious story which closes the notice of Yü-t'ien in the T'ang Annals. It relates how Chu Ju-yü, a palace official sent in 780 A. D. to Khotan to purchase jade articles for the emperor Tê tsung, was on the return journey robbed of his precious acquisitions by marauding Hui-ho (Uigurs)<sup>43</sup>.

Wu-k'ung's  
visit to  
Khotan,  
circ. 786 A. D.

End of  
Chinese  
supremacy,  
circ. 791 A. D.

## SECTION V.—LATER CHINESE RECORDS OF KHOTAN

From the year 790-791 Chinese records cease to furnish any information on the region once comprised in the 'Four Garrisons' for nearly one and a half centuries. As the notice of the Posterior Tsin Annals to be discussed presently tells us, 'the troubles which agitated China

<sup>37</sup> *Turcs occid.*, p. 127; *Notes addit.*, p. 61. The Annals give the name of the princess as *Ma*; the record of the *Ts'ê fu yüan kuei* calls her *Wei*, perhaps an abbreviation of the royal family name.

<sup>38</sup> *Turcs occid.*, p. 127, with note 4.

<sup>39</sup> See above, pp. 8 sqq.

<sup>40</sup> *Ville de Khotan*, p. 71; Chavannes, *Notes addit.*, p. 80.

<sup>41</sup> See Chavannes and S. Lévi, *L'Itinéraire d'Ou-k'ong*, p. 27.

<sup>42</sup> See above, pp. 63 sqq.

<sup>43</sup> See Rémusat, *Ville de Khotan*, pp. 72 sq.