

was a qualified Chinese secretary. For the tasks before me the help of a Chinese scholar had from the first appeared indispensable. Having always had to carry on my labours in India amidst struggles for leisure, I had never had a chance of adding to my philological equipment by a serious study of Chinese, however much I realized its importance. And with plans of exploration which were to take me so much farther east and right into China proper, the sense of this great gap weighed heavily upon me. Though I had long before my start informed Mr. Macartney, that most helpful of friends, of my anxiety to secure a competent Chinese assistant, I knew that it would be no easy matter to find one fitting my peculiar requirements.

In view of probable finds of Chinese records and other remains of Chinese origin needing antiquarian elucidation on the spot, I was obliged to look out for a *literatus* with regular training. In order to find my way quickly into the rudiments of colloquial Chinese, and to make the most of such scanty lessons in the language as I might find time for in the saddle or in camp, it seemed important to secure a teacher acquainted at least with the elements of Turki or some other language which might serve as a medium of interpretation. Finally, I could not think of taking any one with me who was not willing and physically fit to face the hardships of travel. *Literati* of any attainments are rare enough in that land of exile, the 'New Dominion,' and they generally manage to find snug posts in the Ya-mêns with fair prospects of future promotion. The outlook of prolonged wanderings far away from the flesh-pots of official headquarters has nothing enticing for the 'Ssŭ-yehs,' the gentlemen-clerks and office candidates, whose ranks were alone likely to contain a suitable man.

It was hence a pleasant surprise to me when Mr. Macartney on my arrival informed me that he had already a likely aspirant *in petto*,—a friend of the Chinese Munshi to the Agency whom Macartney had heard of at Yarkand. He was promptly written for to present himself in person, and duly arrived some ten days later. Yin Ma Chiang, or Chiang-ssŭ-yeh (Fig. 39), to give him his familiar title,