

Amban received me like an old friend, but yet with all honour and ceremony. Nothing was wanting in preparations. On passing through the inner gate I found the whole establishment drawn up in due order of precedence, from the red-clothed executioners upwards, and all in the newest of garments. Never in dear old P'an Ta-jên's days had the Khotan Ya-mên seen such display.

Yet my reception by the Amban was not the less hearty for this. I had to tell him in detail of my experiences in the mountains and, of course, did not screen from him all the wiles of Karanghu-tagh obstruction. Ch'ê Ta-jên manifestly grasped the curious mixture of timorousness and dogged *vis inertiae* in those hill-men, and how difficult it was to cope with it. His own attitude was that of a sensible administrator who realized that his means of coercion could not safely be put to a test there. If such obstruction occurred anywhere in the district proper, he declared, he would beat those who tried it into obedience even if he had to move out with his troops for the purpose. But what was to be done in the mountains? I thought of the gorges I had passed through, of the rivers which formed almost impenetrable bulwarks, and felt glad that there was no need to expose peaceable Chinese soldiers to such trials.

Ch'ê Ta-jên requested my presence at a garden-party he was anxious to give in my honour to the assembled dignitaries of the district, and pressed his invitation so warmly that there was no escape from the function. It took place on the afternoon of the second day of my stay, soon after I had received the Amban's return visit at my garden. With Badruddin Khan's help an open pavilion where Akhun Beg used to enjoy himself on warm summer days, had been gaily decked out with red felt rugs and Khotan carpets. To give colour to the human *entourage* I made Naik Ram Singh in his scarlet and blue uniform of the 1st Sappers and Miners take his place by the side of the Amban's attendants. The towering height of his burly figure did not fail to make an impression. I presented the Amban on this occasion with a copy of the *Travels of Fa-hsien*, the earliest extant record of a Chinese