

Buddhist pilgrim to India, in the neat edition of the Clarendon Press, and with the account of a more recent traveller in search of Buddhist sanctuaries—my own *Sand-buried Ruins of Khotan*. That the illustrations of the latter were more eagerly scanned and interpreted by the Amban than the difficult text of old Fa-hsien might have flattered my literary vanity, had I not known how much of this attention was to be attributed to Chinese politeness.

The feast to which I proceeded a few hours later was an experience sufficiently novel to compensate for the time it cost—and for the trial it necessarily implied for a European digestion. But a few rapid notes must suffice here. Ch'ê Ta-jên had planned hospitality on a large scale, and had invited whatever of Begs, Qazis and other notables he could gather at headquarters. The old garden palace of Nar-bagh was the scene of the treat. But what change was worked in this familiar place! The crowds filling the spacious outer courts, the bustle of numberless cooks and attendants seemed to revive the days when Niaz Hakim Beg sat there in state. The central pavilion of the garden, where I had found a peaceful retreat during previous stays, served now as the Amban's reception-room for his Chinese guests and myself. The whole of the civil staff at headquarters was invited, and with the eight Ssü-yehs representing it there came also a jovial-looking relative of the Amban, no doubt a candidate for office, who had recently arrived on a visit from Urumchi.

The long paved causeway serving as approach from the Aiwan of the residence to the pavilion was allotted to the Muhammadan guests, and through the double row of Begs lining this broad causeway shaded by vines and fruit trees (Fig. 70) I was conducted in solemn procession. In two of the other avenues radiating crosswise from the pavilion the crowd of lesser dignitaries was entertained. In the third, discreetly hidden, I discovered arrangements for letting those of the Chinese guests who cared for it enjoy the pleasures of an opium smoke. I should never have suspected them, had I not been led to this quiet corner in search of a convenient place from which to