

exactly indicated, is stated to be 'Ta Yüeh-chih' or Indo-Scythian. It is evident that the mercenaries employed under Chinese officers at this post, and probably also at other and more important garrisons of the 'Western Kingdoms,' were mainly drawn from that foreign nation which in Chinese eyes had the merit of representing the hereditary foe of the Hsiung-nu or Huns.

We know from the Han Annals that the 'Great Yüeh-chih,' the later Indo-Scythians, had been driven by the Huns in the second century B.C. from the plains north of the T'ien-shan, first to Sogdiana and thence to the Oxus region which remained the main seat of their power for centuries, even after their conquest of Northern India. While established north of the T'ien-shan the Huns were by their inroads a constant danger to the oases of the Tarim Basin and the great route leading through it. Finding the local population then probably as unwarlike as it is now, and much divided by internal rivalry, Chinese political wisdom naturally fell back upon the expedient of enlisting troops from its western neighbours, the Indo-Scythians, whom the common danger threatening from the Huns was likely to make trustworthy. A comparison with the conditions prevailing about this very period along the northern borders of the Roman empire might furnish curious parallels.

It is, however, not of such general aspects of China's Central-Asian policy that we can expect direct information in our office records from this site. The military incidents which they mention relate mainly to petty cases of individual soldiers. Thus we hear in some detail of the unhappy end of a man who through the negligence of his officer was drowned in deep water, severe punishment being meted out to the guilty superior. Elsewhere we are furnished with a list of all the kit in clothing and felts, issued to a 'barbarian' soldier on joining, and so on.

One of these brief reports on matters of discipline is of interest, as it mentions Lou-lan as a place to which a certain man had proceeded and from which his early return was to be secured. The way in which the matter is brought to the addressee's notice makes it clear that his