

the king of Lou-lan, subjugated Turfan, and overawed the small states westwards.

When subsequently, in 104 B.C., an envoy to the chiefs of Ta-wan or Farghana had been killed, and the Emperor Wu-ti was obliged to send an expedition to chastise that distant territory, it was again at Lou-lan that a body of Hun horsemen endeavoured to cut off the return of the victorious Chinese leader. Thereupon a relieving force of Chinese troops advanced from the 'Jade Gate,' the end of the fortified frontier line which some years earlier had been pushed forward beyond the newly occupied territory of Tun-huang. Its appearance forced the king of Lou-lan to break finally with the Huns and "to place his State within the bounds of the Chinese empire." In consequence of this successful expedition "resting stations were erected at intervals, from Tun-huang westward as far as Lake Lop."

At the same time two military colonies were established and a 'Deputy Protector' created to exercise Chinese political control in the Tarim Basin, and this must have made the maintenance of a practicable line of communication doubly important. The difficulties with which the Chinese advance beyond Tun-huang had to contend, both from nature and man, are curiously reflected in a passage of Chang Ch'ien's biography contained in the Annals. Before the chiefs of Farghana decided to repel the imperial mission they are said to have reflected: "China is at a great distance from our country, and travellers thence are frequently lost in the Salt Desert. If they leave by the northern route they are exposed to the Hun raids; if they take the southern route they suffer from want of water and pasture, and at many parts of the road, where there are no settled inhabitants, great scarcity prevails. If the Chinese envoys come with a retinue of several hundred persons more than half of them usually die of starvation on the way. How then can they possibly send an army?" There can be no doubt that the physical obstacles here alluded to must have been greatest on that part of the route which lay east of Lou-lan.

By the time we reached Koshe-langza I felt certain