

Turkestan as it presents itself in the historical Annals and also to modern Chinese administration, though he had never served in that province. His knowledge was based wholly on books, and these, he frankly acknowledged, had told him nothing whatever about the ruined line of towers and wall I had traced in the desert.

Whether local information about it would be forthcoming from the people of Tun-huang remained to be seen. In a subdued conversation with Chiang-ssü-yeh he described them as very distrustful and rather awkward to handle. But he in any case would do his best to help me, whatever the difficulties might be about getting guides and labour for the desert. When he left us, after some hours of cheering confabulation, and more than one cup of tea, both Chiang and myself felt assured that for the work before us we could count on the genuine goodwill of a newly won scholar-friend.

Eager as I was to get ready for fresh explorations in the field, a number of practical obligations combined to prolong my halt at Tun-huang. Men and animals alike were much in need of a rest to recover from the preceding hardships. But though my body had its share in this enforced quiescence, there were plenty of urgent tasks to keep me very busy otherwise. Within thirty-six hours after our arrival I managed to pay off and dismiss to Charklik the whole of the donkey convoy which had helped us so effectively on the desert journey. It was a troublesome affair, for the animals belonged to different owners, and the payments had to be adjusted with regard to the services of the men who had looked after the donkeys, compensation for the six beasts which had died, etc. Then came the distribution of rewards among those men who had taken good care of their charges, and finally committal of the whole complicated account to Turki writing to assure faithful transmission of the moneys due at Abdal and Charklik. The men, well pleased with the sums I paid into their hands, were eager to set out on the long journey homewards. I, too, felt hearty relief when I saw the whole band gaily depart with the loads of maize I had presented as a *viaticum* for the donkeys.