

learning, and the very limited extent of his knowledge in general. So I knew that it would be futile to talk to him about my archaeological interests, about the need of first-hand materials for Chinese historical and antiquarian studies, and the like, as I was accustomed to do on meeting educated Chinese officials, ever ready to be interested in such topics. But the presence of this quaint priest, with his curious mixture of pious zeal, naïve ignorance, and astute tenacity of purpose, forcibly called to my mind those early Buddhist pilgrims from China who, simple in mind but strong in faith and—superstition, once made their way to India in the face of formidable difficulties.

More than once before, my well-known attachment to the memory of Hsüan-tsang, the greatest of those pilgrims, had been helpful in securing me a sympathetic hearing both among the learned and the simple. Wang Tao-shih, too, had probably heard about it. So surrounded by these tokens of lingering Buddhist worship, genuine though distorted, I thought it appropriate to tell Wang Tao-shih, as well as my poor Chinese would permit, of my devotion to the saintly traveller; how I had followed his footsteps from India for over ten thousand Li across inhospitable mountains and deserts; how in the course of this pilgrimage I had traced to its present ruins, however inaccessible, many a sanctuary he had piously visited and described; and so on.

I confess, it never cost me any effort to grow eloquent on the subject of my 'Chinese patron saint,' whose guidance had so often proved fruitful for my own work. But now it was made doubly easy by the gleam of lively interest which I caught in the Tao-shih's eyes, otherwise so shy and fitful. As Chiang, in reply to interjected questions, elaborated details and made the most of my familiarity with Hsüan-tsang's authentic records and the distant scenes of his travels, I could read the impression made in the Taoist priest's generally puzzling countenance. Very soon I felt sure that the Tao-shih, though poorly versed in and indifferent to things Buddhist, was quite as ardent an admirer in his own way of 'T'ang-sêng,' the great 'monk of the T'ang period,' as I am in another.

I had ocular proof of this when he took us outside into