

consequence.⁶ In any case, it is worth noting that the *Lung-lo*, also mentioned in the last-named document, is the sub-prefecture which, as we have seen already, is named by the *Han shu* as containing both Yü-mên kuan and Yang kuan.⁷ In Nos. 379, 380, we have orders issued to officers at the Yü-mên barrier, and apparently relating to the passage of persons or goods. Finally, it is of interest to find in *Doc.* No. 357, unfortunately a mere fragment, mention made of 'the *t'ing* 亭 of the Yü-mên barrier'. We shall see that the term *t'ing* was applied to a small area under military administration maintaining a company for the defence of the Limes.⁸

Escort of
So-chü
envoy men-
tioned.

Besides the documents directly naming the 'Jade Gate', there are a number which by their contents show that the place where they were found must have been more than a usual watch-station by the wall. Among these, special interest attaches to two unfortunately incomplete wooden slips, T. XIV. iii. 27, 26, *Doc.*, Nos. 310, 311 (Plate X), which record issues of grain to '87 soldiers forming the escort of the honourable envoy to *So-chü*, i. e. Yärkand', and to 'two young men of quality' evidently belonging to his entourage. Both documents were recovered close together from the refuse-heap T. XIV. iii, which, as we have seen, dates back to the earliest years of the Limes. This affords an additional reason for connecting them with one of those embassies to kingdoms of the 'Western Regions' which, according to the Former Han Annals, were particularly frequent during the early expansion of Chinese political control westwards, and which, as M. Chavannes has rightly pointed out, were accompanied by considerable escorts.⁹ It is obvious that on a border line in the desert, where the provisioning even of the detachments regularly maintained on guard must have been a matter of considerable difficulty, the rationing of such large parties passing along the protected route could not have been effected at any ordinary watch-station. If, however, T. XIV represents the site of the administrative headquarters at the western end of the 'barrier', and thus, as I believe, that of the 'Jade Gate', the issue of supplies here is fully accounted for.¹⁰ Similar issues are recorded also in *Doc.* Nos. 312, 336.

Records
mention
high
officials.

Evidence in support of this belief may also be gathered from documents emanating from, or relating to, persons of official consequence such as were not likely to have been in direct touch with those who were quartered at a mere ordinary watch-station. Thus, on a piece of wood resembling a wedge covering-tablet, *Doc.* No. 341 (Plate XI), we have a list of presents sent by the military commandant of Tun-huang and comprising *inter alia* 'a woman of the Wu-sun', a donkey, and a pair of horses. The mention of this Wu-sun woman, evidently a slave, is of some historical interest, as the nomadic tribe of the Wu-sun, which had originally occupied seats east of Tun-huang and subsequently followed the Ta Yüeh-chih on their migration westwards, plays a prominent part in the story of China's early Central-Asian efforts as recorded by the Former Han Annals.¹¹ In another document, T. XIV. i. 7, *Doc.*, No. 367 (Plate XI), dated A. D. 9, we read of a letter from the Chang-shih of Tun-huang, the arrival of which is recorded by a subaltern official (*shih-fu*) attached to the 'barrier'. By the latter designation, as also in No. 373, the headquarters of Yü-mên is manifestly referred to. We may attach a similar import also to documents like Nos. 375, 376

⁶ It is easy to think of a kind of Political Officer exercising civil control over parties passing the frontier, etc., as distinct from the military administration of the Limes. But, of course, surmises on the subject must be left for competent Sinologist inquiry. [For a different interpretation of *hou* in *Doc.* No. 378, cf. *Corr. & Add.*]

⁷ See above, p. 620; Giles, *J.R.A.S.*, 1914, p. 715.

⁸ See below, chap. xx. sec. v.

⁹ Cf. Wylie, *J. Anthropol. Inst.*, x. pp. 22, 25, 70 sq.; Chavannes, *Documents*, p. 73, quoting Ssü-ma Ch'ien.

¹⁰ I am guided in the above observations by what a large personal experience along routes maintained under somewhat similar difficulties across the Hindukush, the Pāmirs, along the fringe of the Taklamakān Desert, and elsewhere has taught me. Small relatively as my party was, supplies for it had invariably to be arranged at, and carried along from, important main stages; see *Ruins of Khotan* and *Desert Cathay, passim*.

¹¹ Cf. Wylie, *J. Anthropol. Inst.*, x. pp. 68 sqq. There is a reference to a mission from a Wu-sun chief contained, perhaps, in T. XIV. ii. 20, *Doc.*, No. 340.