

Before proceeding further, it is appropriate to point out that there are other documents also, besides those referring to 'T'ings', which prove that the permanent location of the border troops was within the inhabited area. Thus in *Doc. No. 173* we read of the 'walled town', *ch'êng 城*, of a company (*tui*) having been taken and burned by brigands who killed two hundred and twenty people. The reference is here clearly to one of those walled enclosures, now known as *p'u-tzū*, which are still to be found everywhere on the Kan-su marches, sheltering villages or else meant to be used in troubled times as places of refuge by the occupants of scattered hamlets and farms.³⁵ In *No. 189* some officer, evidently concerned with the settling of military colonists for the Limes, reports that a certain 'locality is not unsuitable as regards . . . the sowing of crops; but it is not possible from there to exercise watch and guard to a distance'. *No. 496* records the allotment of thirty acres (*mu 畝*) of land to a certain settler, evidently arrived from a distance for service on the border. Nor is the record in *No. 699* of grain issued for members of different families, including children and a girl, likely to have found its way to an outlying watch-post on the Limes wall if the men placed there on duty had not had their families in the newly settled parts of the inhabited area.^{35a}

Border troops settled in inhabited area.

We have already seen that the chief routine duty of the company units was to supply the pickets which were stationed at the different watch-towers and posts. It is in connexion with this service that the references in our documents to individual companies and their captains are most frequent. The survey of the remains of the Limes, as contained in Chapters XV, XVII-XIX, has already given opportunity for showing how the guarding of particular watch-towers and the adjoining portions of the Limes wall was entrusted to certain individual companies.³⁶ There is, therefore, no reason once more to follow up here the details of this allocation, which in some cases at least may be supposed to have remained unchanged for considerable periods, as far as the company units were concerned. That the men actually on picket duty were posted and relieved in rotation may, in view of all that has been explained above as to the trying conditions of life at these exposed desert posts, the agricultural obligations of the soldier colonists, etc., be safely assumed, even though I can trace only one apparent reference to the point. It is furnished by the label-shaped document *No. 616*, which contains the heading: 'List of soldiers such as is to be made out for (or at) the four seasons of the year.' If my assumption is right, it would follow that each term of duty on guard extended to one season. But, of course, a different interpretation could also be thought of.^{36a}

Watch-towers guarded by individual companies.

The watch-towers are designated in the documents either as *hou 候* or *fêng hou 烽候* or simply *fêng 烽*. As to the significance of these terms and their use in historical texts I must refer to M. Chavannes' explanations.³⁷ The officers in charge of the watch-towers bore the title of *hou-chang 候長*, 'commandant of the watch-tower'; references to them in the documents are almost as frequent as those to the captains of companies.³⁸ They were, no doubt, primarily responsible for the maintenance of discipline, the efficiency of the guard and signal service, supply of rations, etc., at their posts.³⁹ The fact that they are frequently designated by the addition of

Officers in charge of watch-towers.

³⁵ Cf. regarding these *p'u-tzū*, *Desert Cathay*, ii. pp. 8, 40, 235, 267, 298, 332.

^{35a} In *No. 617* we read of an order to be sent 'to the commandants of watch-posts and to the company residences 隊次'.

³⁶ Cf. above, p. 747, note 26.

^{36a} *No. 193*, not completely legible, states: 'twenty-nine men will mount guard'.

³⁷ Cf. *Documents*, p. xii. The word *fêng 烽* in its original application designates the stacks of wood lit to

produce heavy smoke for signal purposes in daytime; see *ibid.* p. xi.

³⁸ Cf. *Documents*, p. xi, note 2, for a list to which Nos. 309, 570, 574 should be added.

³⁹ Thus, e.g., in *Doc. No. 439* the *hou-chang* of Kao-wang is directed to pursue certain deserters; in *No. 487* another submits a list of soldiers and watch-dogs entitled to be furnished with rations; Nos. 80-3 show commandants of watch-posts or their deputies (*hou-chih*) passing with official orders, etc.