

was taken away in carts, packed in a very perfunctory fashion, and after some delay at the Tun-huang Ya-mên started on its long way to Peking. A good deal of pilfering was known to have occurred already while the carts were kept waiting at Tun-huang, as proved by the bundles of fine Buddhist text rolls of T'ang times which were brought to me for sale there, and acquired at modest rates. The guarding of the convoy must have been equally careless further on, as similar opportunities for rescuing relics of the great *cache* were also offered to me at Su-chou and Kan-chou. Other packets of Ch'ien-fo-tung rolls must have been carried away into Hsin-chiang, where I was shown a number of such old manuscripts at different Ya-mêns and could myself secure some more from Chinese petty employés, etc. I must leave it to others to ascertain how much of the original collection actually arrived in Peking, and what care it has found there.

Manuscript
acquisitions
renewed in
1914.

In view of the official treatment which Wang Tao-shih's cherished store of 'Chings' had thus suffered, I did not feel surprise at his now expressing bitter regret that he had not possessed the courage and wisdom to accept the big offer I had made in 1907 through Chiang Ssü-yeh for the whole collection. His devout *clientèle* among the Tun-huang population, seeing how well he had laid out the sums received, first from myself and then from Pei Ta-jên, i.e. M. Pelliot, in building new gaudy chapels and a large, comfortable hospice, seemed to agree in sharing his feelings. They, no doubt, fully approved too of the shrewd precaution which the honest Taoist monk had taken against the official spoliation of the temple becoming too complete. Before the removal above referred to, supposed to be wholesale, took place, he had managed to store away in a safe place a nest-egg, as it were, of such Chinese manuscripts as he conceived to be of special value. It must have been considerable in extent; for even after what Mr. Tachibana in 1911 had been able to acquire from this reserve store, there remained enough to allow me to carry away, as a fruit of my renewed pilgrimage to the site, five cases filled with Chinese manuscript rolls, most of them in a particularly good state of preservation. That the donation made in return to the shrine had to be raised in proportion to the increased fame of the original hoard is obvious—and equally also the doubt whether the reserve has even now become completely exhausted. And here 'the Priest's Tale' from the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas may fitly end for the present.