

Selections from the Han Narrative Histories

The period of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) in many ways can be said to mark the beginning of the history of the Silk Road. This time marked the first lengthy period of unified rule over China, a time of great political, economic and cultural achievements. As the Han histories reveal, one of the preoccupations of the rulers was relations with the nomads to their north (occupying approximately the territory of current Mongolia and the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region), known in the sources as the Xiongnu (Hsiung-nu, Hsiung-nu). Although Chinese policies regarding relations with the nomads changed over time, most of the variants were explored and much debated under the Han. Although the Chinese came to adopt an attitude of superiority to "Barbarian" outsiders, in fact it was often the nomads who held the upper hand. The exchange of "tribute" was really a form of international trade, and the battles along the borders guarded by the defensive system of the Great Wall, which the Han extended, generally involved economic issues and the control over markets.

The strategy of accomodating the nomads, which had been common under the early Han changed with the accession of perhaps the most famous of the Han emperors, Wu-ti (140-87 BCE). As part of his aggressive policy toward the Xiongnu, he sent Zhang Qian (Chang K'ien) on a mission to Inner Asia, to explore the possibilty of a Han alliance with other nomadic states such as the Yueh-chih. Zhang Qian's mission, which took a decade and a half to complete, marks an important stage in the development of Han political and economic relations with Inner Asia. His reports regarding the countries to the West were used as sources for later compilations of political and economic intelligence (such as the "Description of the Western Regions") and stimulated the development of the "Silk Road.

The accounts reproduced here offer then some fascinating material about the nature of Chinese relations with the nomads, the development of the Inner Asian trade, and a Chinese perspective on the culture and geography of Inner Asia.

These accounts have been condensed from two sources. The history of Chinese relations with the Hsiung-nu and the "Description of the Western Regions" are from the *Han Shu*, as translated by A. Wylie in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vols. III (1874), pp. 401-452, V (1876), pp. 41-80, and X (1881), pp. 20-73, and XI (1882), pp. 83-115. I have interpolated in approximately the proper chronological order the account of Zhang Qian's mission to the West, in the translation by Friedrich Hirth published in the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 37/2 (1917), pp. 93-116. With rare exceptions, I have made no effort to normalize spellings of proper names. Where it seemed particularly useful, I have moved some identifications from the translators' notes into the texts or added my own identifications in brackets. Obviously such editorial annotation will require further checking against more recent scholarship.

In order to facilitate locating material in the texts, I have provided some sub-headings and links to the various bookmarked sections via the table of contents.

Contents:

- I. [Beginnings of Relations with the Hsiung-nu.](#)
- II. [Relations with the Hsiung-nu in the Reign of Emperor Wu-ti](#) (140-87 BCE).
- III. [The Mission to the West by Zhang Qian](#) (Chang K'ien).
- IV. Relations with the Hsiung-nu [Following the Reign of Emperor Wu-ti](#)
- V. A Chinese Memorial Discussing Strategy of the Building and Maintaining of the [Great Wall](#).
- VI. A Chinese [Memorial Arguing Against Campaigns](#) Deep into Hsiung-nu Territory.
- VII. [Notes on the Western Regions.](#)
(Introduction)
[Shen-shen](#)
[Yu-teen \(Khotan\)](#)

[Ke-pin \(Kophen \[Kabulistan\]\)](#)

[Woo-yih-shan-li \[Khorasan\]](#)

[Gan-seih \(Parthia\)](#)

[Ta Yue-she \(Massagetae\)](#)

[K-ang-keu \(Soghdiana\)](#)

[Ta-yuan \[Ta-wan\]\(Ferghana\)](#)

[Wu-sun](#)

[Kwei-esze \(Kuchay\)](#)

[Woo-luy](#)

[Keu-li](#)

[Yen-ke \(Karashar\)](#)

[Poo-luy \(Urumtsi\)](#)

[Anterior Keu-sze \(Turfan\)](#)

[Pan Koo's Reflections](#) on the Preceding Notes

I. Beginnings of Relations with the Hsiung-nu.

[Description of the customs of the Hsiung-nu]

The first ancestor of the Hsiung-nu, named Chun-wei, was a descendant of the Great Yu the founder of the Hea dynasty.

Previous to the time of Yaou and Shun we hear of a race called the mountain Jung. These were the Heen-yun or Heun-yuh, who inhabited the northern regions, and removed from place to place, according to the pasturage for their flocks and herds. The bulk of their stock consisted of horses, oxen and sheep; but in smaller numbers they bred likewise camels, asses, mules, horse-ass hybrids, wild horses and hybrids of the same. Removing their herds to find water and pasturage, they had no fixed cities, but dwelt on their rural patrimonies, each family having its allotted portion of land. they had no written character, but performed oral contracts. The children rode on sheep, and shot birds and squirrels with the bow and arrow. When a little bigger, they shot foxes and hares, the flesh of which they ate. On reaching manhood, when able to bend a bow, they were fully equipped and mounted on horseback. In time of peace they hunted for their living; but when harassed by war, they cultivated martial exercises, to fit them for invasion or attack, which was agreeable to their disposition. The taller troops were armed with bows and arrows; the shorter with swords and spears. When successful in the contest, they pressed forward ; but on meeting with a reverse, they retreated, and thought it no shame to run away. On gaining a victory they showed no regard to propriety or equity. From the king downwards all ate the flesh of domestic animals, and clothed themselves with the skins, wearing a fur covering over all. The able-bodied ate the fat and choice portions, while the aged ate and drank what was left. The strong and robust were held in esteem, while the old and feeble were treated with contempt. When a father died, they married their widowed mother; and when a brother died, it was customary to marry his widow. Their names were not transmitted to their descendants....

According to their laws, he who drew a sword a foot in length against another was put to death; anyone guilty of highway robbery was deprived of his family possessions. Small crimes were punished with the rack; and greater crimes with death. The longest imprisonment did not amount to ten days; and all the prisoners in the country only numbered a few individuals..

Early in the morning the Shen-yu [the leader of the Hsiung-nu] went outside the camp to worship the rising sun, and in the evening he worshipped the moon....In funerals they used coffins and cases containing gold, silver and clothing; but they had no grave-mound, trees or mourning apparel. Several tens or even hundreds of near dependants and concubines were accustomed to follow their master's funeral.

In undertaking any military enterprise, they were always guided by the moon. When the moon was about full, they would engage in battle; but when on the wane, they withdrew from the contest. When one beheaded a captive in battle, he received a goblet of wine, and was allowed to retain the booty. Captives were given as slaves to their captors; so that in war, every man was struggling for personal profit. They were clever at leading the enemy into an ambushade, and then surrounding them. The eagerness of the scramble was like birds flocking to the prey; but when calamity overtook them, they were dispersed like scattered tiles or passing clouds. Any one bringing home the body of a man slain in battle, got the property of the deceased.

At a subsequent period, in the north, they subjected the Hwan-yu, the Keu-shih, the Ting-ling, the Kih-hwan-lung, and the Sin-li nations. The nobles and chief men of the Hsiung-nu then all submitted to Maou-tun, whom they looked up to as a wise prince.

[The Hsiung-nu, led by Shen-yu Maou-tun (209-174 BCE), attack the Han.]

The Han dynasty having just come into power, Sin, the prince of Han was removed to Tae, and made his capital at Ma-ye [modern Su-chou]. This city was forthwith surrounded by the Hsiung-nu, who took the place after a vigorous assault, in the autumn of B.C. 201. Having secured the submission and co-operation of Sin of Han, the Hsiung-nu marched south, across the Kow stream, to attack Tae-yuen ; and when under the walls of the capital, Kaou-te, the Emperor of the Han, took up arms and went in person to oppose them. It being winter time, what with the severe frost, the rain and the snow, twenty to thirty per cent. of the Emperor's troops lost the use of their fingers. Maou-tun, watching his opportunity, made an appearance of being defeated and fled, drawing all the Han troops after him. While the latter eagerly followed up the pursuit, Maou-tun concealed his best soldiers, and exposed the weak and emaciated. The Chinese, confident in their great numbers, told off three hundred and twenty thousand infantry for the pursuit. Kaou-te, with a detachment of these, arriving at Ping-Ching, before the great body had come up, Maou-tun immediately brought into the field three hundred thousand of his choicest cavalry, and surrounded the Emperor's party at Pih-tang hill. For seven days all communication was cut off between the Chinese forces inside and those outside the circle, the enclosed party being thus deprived of provisions.

The Hsiung-nu horses on the west side were all white; on the east they were all white-faced greys; on the north they were all black, and on the south they were all bays. Reduced to extremities, Kaou-te quietly sent a messenger to the consort of the Shen-yu, to seek by liberal promises to secure her influence, in which he was successful. The consort addressing Maou-tun, said:--"Why should two sovereigns distress each other? Having now got possession of the Han territory, the Shen-yu can never occupy it; moreover the Shen-yu sacrifices to the spirits of the Lords of Han." Now Maou-tun having previously made an agreement with Wang Hwang and Chaou Li, two generals of Sin the prince of Han, and having been long looking in vain for their arrival, at length began to suspect some plot between them and the Chinese; hence he acceded the more willingly to his consort's suggestion, and made an opening at one corner of the cordon. Kaou-te then ordered his troops to take their full compliment of arrows, pointing outwards, and so passing straight out at the open corner, they joined the great body of the army. Maou-tun then withdrew his forces, and the Chinese troops ceased all hostile movements, while Liw King was sent to make a treaty of peace and friendship with the Hsiung-nu. Subsequently Sin of Han, being a general under the Hsiung-nu, together with Chaou Li and Wang Hwang, several times broke the treaty , forming bandit incursions on Tae, Yen-mun and Yun-chung. After no very long time Chin He rebelled, and in conjunction with the Sin of Han, formed a plot to attack Tae. The Chinese sent a commissioner Fan K'wae, who met the invaders, defeated them, and recovered the various cities of Tae, Yen-mun and Yun-chung, but did not go beyond the stockades.

About that time, parties of the Hsiung-nu frequently, on meeting the Chinese general at the head of his troops, would tender their submission; on which account Maou-tun kept up a succession of raids on the country about Tae.

This was a cause of much anxiety to the Chinese, and eventually led the Emperor to adopt the notable expedient of sending a princess of the imperial house to Maou-tun, for his consort.

The lady Ung-choo was selected, and conveyed to the home of her new lord by Liw King. It was hoped that the issue of this union might be more imbued with Chinese susceptibilities and tendencies, and thus be the more easily brought under control. In pursuance of the same policy, the Chinese sent yearly presents of raw and wove silk, wine and food, thus aiming to cultivate Chinese tastes among them; and on each occasion the fraternal bond of peace and amity was renewed, so that for a time there was a cessation of Maou-tun's incursions...

[A renewal of hostilities was imminent until the Chinese were diverted by internal rebellion. The following material gives a good idea of the strategies on both sides and the Chinese version of some of the cultural differences. The weaknesses of the Chinese defenses are clear, as is the importance of trade along the frontier.]

The next we hear of [the Hsiung-nu] is in the year 176, when the Shen-yu resolved on a dispatch to the Emperor, to the following effect:--" The Great Shen-yu, by the will of God ruler of the Hsiung-nu nation, respectfully salutes the Emperor of China. Formerly your Majesty was pleased to express your gratification on the conclusion of a treaty of peace and amity. In the same spirit the Right Sage prince bore without complaint the menacing insults of the Chinese officials on the border; till the matter assumed such dimensions, that it became a question of deliberation by Nan-che the Marquis of E-liu and others, how to avoid a breach of the treaty and maintain the

fraternal relations. Once and again letters of remonstrance were received from Your Majesty; but when I despatched an envoy with a reply, he did not return, nor was there any messenger from Your Majesty, while the case was treated by you *casus belli*. Now in consequence of a slight breach of the treaty by some petty officials, you pursued the Right Sage prince, till he was driven westward into the territories of the Yue-te. There, however, heaven favoured our cause: our officers and troops were loyal and true; our horses were strong and spirited; and by slaughter, decapitation, subjugation and pacification, our army effected the complete reduction of the Yue-te; while Lou-lan, Wu-sun, Hoo-kee and the adjacent kingdoms, to the number of twenty-six in all, without exception, submitted to the Hsiung-nu; and thus all the bowmen nations are united as one family. Having also tranquillized the northern lands, we are now desirous that there should be a cessation of hostilities, and that the troops should send their horses to pasture. Let the past be forgotten and the treaty renewed; that the people on the borders may enjoy peace as it was in the days of old; and so the young may attain to maturity; the aged may live unmolested, and uninterrupted happiness prevail from age to age."

About the same time, the Chinese Emperor would seem to have been troubled with some suspicions regarding the Hsiung-nu, and despatched the commissioner Ke Hoo-tseen with a letter, in which he requested the Shen-yu to send him a camel, two riding horses and two studs of carriage horses. Uneasy about the approach of the Hsiung-nu to the stockades, he ordered all the officials and people dwelling on the borders to remove their habitations to a considerable distance. The Shen-yu on his part, complied with the Emperor's request, and sent forward the offerings with the above epistle. On the arrival of the missive at the Chinese court, during the summer of 175, a consultation was held to discuss the expediency of attacking the Hsiung-nu or renewing the treaty of peace with them. Peaceful counsels prevailed; it was the general opinion that the Shen-yu having just acquired the prestige of victory over the Yue-te, it would be impolitic to make an attack on them then. Besides it was argued by some that the conquest of the Hueng-noo territory would be of little advantage to China; the waters were salt and the country uninhabitable; so that the far wiser method would be to renew the treaty. The Emperor acceded to the suggestion.

Consequent on these deliberations, the following year an envoy was dispatched to the Hsiung-nu. The envoy with a letter to the effect: "The Emperor of China respectfully salutes the Shen-yu of the Hsiung-nu. The envoy Ke Hoo-tseen as brought me a letter, in which you say that you are desirous that there should be a cessation of hostilities, that the past should be forgotten and the treaty renewed, that the people on the borders may enjoy peace, and uninterrupted happiness prevail from age to age. All this has my perfect approbation, being in accordance with the policy of the sage Monarchs of ancient times. When China entered into a fraternal treaty with the Hsiung-nu, the Shen-yu was treated with the greatest liberality. The breach of the treaty and the interruption of amicable relations has always been on the side of Hsiung-nu. But the trespass of the Right Sage prince having already been pardoned, I will not now accumulate reproaches. If you really entertain the feelings expressed in this letter, let strict injunctions be given to all your officers, to beware of breaking the treaty in future, and that they manifest fidelity and respect in accordance with the tenor of your epistle. We hear from the envoy, the great merit you have acquired by your military enterprises, in subjugating the nations; and in recognition of your arduous achievements, I now beg to present you with a light figured lining imperial embroidered robe, a light long embroidered tunic, and a light variegated gown; also a golden hair comb, a gold ornamented waist-belt, and a buffalo-horn belt fastening; also ten pieces of twilled silk, thirty pieces of variegated silk, and forty pieces each of carnation satin and green silk." These articles were then handed over to the proper functionary, who caused them to be conveyed to the Shen-yu.

In the 10th month of this year, Maou-tun died, and was succeeded by his son Ke-yuh, who assumed the title of (*Laou-shang*) "Venerable high" Shen-yu. On his accession, the Emperor Wan-te, following up the example and policy of his ancestor, sent a princess of the imperial house for a consort to the newly-elevated chieftain, and appointed the eunuch Chung-hing Yue to escort her to her new home. Yue would fain have excused himself, but the monarch overruled all his objections. "If I am compelled to go," he said, "it will be an unfortunate day for the house of Han." On reaching the Hsiung-nu camp, Yue, having resolved to make good his words, tendered his submission to the Shen-yu, who became much attached to him. The confidence thus established ensured to Yue a certain liberty of speech; and when he saw the Shen-yu giving way to a fondness for the dress and the food of China, he did not fail to raise a warning voice, and thus addressed his chief: "The entire Hsiung-nu population is not equal to that of one Chinese province; but one cause of their strength is the simplicity of their dress and food, in which they are independent of China. Now should your Highness change the national customs, and introduce a taste for Chinese luxuries, while the supply of these are only sufficient to meet about one fifth of the requirements, the Hsiung-nu will all go over to the Chinese. Suppose your people were clothed in Chinese silk, in riding about among the thorns and brush-wood their robes and tunics would be unavoidably torn and destroyed; and it is evident that for strength and durability they are not to be compared to good skin garments. It will be wise

also to give up Chinese table delicacies, which are neither so convenient nor so wholesome as good milk and cream." Yue also instructed the officers of the Shen-yu in the art of keeping records, in order that they might preserve a register of the people and the cattle.

When the Emperor of China sent a letter eleven inches in length, inscribed:--"The Emperor respectfully salutes the Shen-yu of the Hsiung-nu," with the presents and complimentary expressions, Chung-hing Yue induced the Shen-yu to send a return letter twelve inches long, with a larger and longer seal, and audaciously worded:--"The great Shen-yu of the Hsiung-nu, the offspring of heaven and earth, ordained by the sun and moon, respectfully salutes the Emperor of the Han," with the usual presents and complimentary expressions. When the Chinese envoy disparagingly remarked that the Hsiung-nu were wanting in their duty towards the aged, Chung-hing Yue replied:--"You Chinese employ agricultural troops to defend the borders; but when they are sent on a military expedition, so miserably are they found in necessities, is it not a fact that their aged parents deprive themselves of their warm clothing and comforts to supply their sons with requisite food during the campaign?" The envoy assented, and Yue continued:--"The Hsiung-nu make war the business of life. The aged and infirm being unable to fight, the choice food is given to the healthy and robust, that they may be able to stand the fatigues of the camp. Thus father and sons are helpful to each other. How then can you say that the Hsiung-nu are wanting in their duty towards the aged?" Continuing the discussion, the envoy remarked:--"Among the Hsiung-nu, father and son sleep in the same cabin. When the father dies, the son takes the mother to wife. When a brother dies, his widow is taken by a surviving brother. They neither wear cap nor sash, and know nothing of the rites of the entrance-hall or the guest-chamber." "As to that," replied Yue, "the Hsiung-nu live on their flocks and herds, and clothe themselves with the skins. The flocks being dependent on the herbage and water, it is necessary, from time to time, to remove to fresh localities. Hence, in time of danger, the men practice equestrian archery; and in the seasons of security, they live at ease and free from care. They have few restraints, and are unembarrassed by conventional forms. The intercourse of prince and subject is simple and durable; and the government of the nation is consolidated as that of a single body. When a father or elder brother dies, the son or younger brother takes the widow to wife, as the abhor the mixture of families. Hence although there are disorders among the Hsiung-nu, yet they preserve the family stem untainted. Now in China, though they do not openly take the widows of their fathers and brothers to wife, yet while matrimonial etiquette requires more distant alliances, this is a fruitful source of murders; and even the change of the surname frequently arises from this custom. Then as to defects in the rites, the ill-feeling that is generated by stringency in the intercourse between superiors and inferiors is such that it may be said, by the time the edifice reaches the summit, the strength of the builders is utterly exhausted. The husbandman spends his force in the labours of tillage and mulberry culture, to procure a supply of food and clothing; and you build cities and outposts for self-defence. But in time of danger the people are not trained to warlike exercises; and in time of peace every one is taken up with his own business. Pshaw! people living in mud huts, with but half a costume and scarcely the power of intelligible speech, what have they to do with caps!" After that when the envoy wished to discuss the merits of Chinese civilization, Yue abruptly cut him short, saying:--"Let not the Han envoy spend his words. The presentation of silks and grain from the Han to the Hsiung-nu is merely a clever device to estimate their numbers. Nor are these gifts in themselves without their drawbacks. On the contrary, when the grain is ripe, it is trodden down by mounted troops, and there is an end of their harvest, much misery and distress being the natural result." Yue continued assiduously day and night to instruct the Shen-yu in the principles of political economy.

A few years of comparative peace followed, till BCE 166, when the Shen-yu at the head of a hundred and forty thousand cavalry entered Chaou-na by the Seaou barrier, killed Sun Ngang the commandant of Pih-t'e, and carried off a great number of the people and cattle. He then advanced on Pang-yang, whence he sent his mounted troops to set fire to the Hwuy-chung palace. On the return of his cavalry from the expedition, he marched on Kan-tseuen in the department of Yung. Wan-te on his part was adopting measures to meet the emergency. The high official Chang Woo was gazetted as general, with a force of a thousand chariots, and a thousand cavalry troops, distributed over the Ch'ang-an region, to ward off the Hoo banditti. Liw King the Marquis of Chang was appointed territorial general of Shang-keun... Under this leadership, a vast levy of carriages and cavalry set forward to attack the Hoo.

The Shen-yu was more than a month inside the stockades, but he retired on the approach of the Chinese army, and the troops of Han returned, without a blow having been struck.

The Hsiung-nu were becoming daily more overbearing; every year they crossed the boundary, killing and carrying off the people and cattle in immense numbers; more especially in Yun-chung and Liaou-tung; and up to the region of Tae, there was a loss in all of more than ten thousand persons. The Chinese being exceedingly distressed by these proceedings, an envoy was dispatched with a letter to the Hsiung-nu chief. The Shen-yu sent a Tang-hoo with a return letter acknowledging favours, and power to discuss the renewal of the treaty.

In 162 the Emperor again addressed a letter to the Shen-yu in the following terms:--" The Emperor of China respectfully salutes the great Shen-yu of the Hsiung-nu. Your highness having sent a Tang-hoo, the Tseay-keu Teauo-nan, and the Gentliman-usher Han-Liaou, with two horses, these I have respectfully received. When my imperial predecessor erected the Great Wall, all the bowmen nations on the north were subject to the Shen-yu; while the residents inside the wall, who wore the cap and sash, were all under our government: and the myriads of the people, by following their occupations, ploughing and weaving, shooting and hunting, were able to provide themselves with food and clothing. No separations took place between fathers and sons; while princes and subjects lived together in peace, free from violence and oppression. Now it is reported that there are certain disreputable people, who seeking to free themselves from their obligations, have turned their back on their duty as subjects and abandoned the treaty; disregarding the welfare of the people, and ignoring the condition of harmony between the two princes. But these are now matters of the past. Your letter says:--"The two nations being now at peace, and the two princes living in harmony, military operations may cease, the troops may send their horses to graze, and prosperity and happiness prevail from age to age, commencing, a new era of contentment and peace." That is extremely gratifying to me. The sages practised daily renovation, renewing their reformations and beginning afresh; giving rest to the aged and causing the young to attain maturity, each fulfilling his responsibility and completing his allotted span of life. Should I, in concert with the Shen-yu, follow this course, complying with the will of heaven, then compassion for the people will be transmitted from age to age, and extended to unending generations, while the universe will be moved with admiration, and the influence will be felt by neighbouring kingdoms inimical to the Chinese or the Hsiung-nu.

"As the Hsiung-nu live in the northern regions, where the cold piercing atmosphere comes at an early period, I have ordered the proper authorities to transmit yearly to the Shen-yu, a certain amount of grain, gold, silks of the finer and coarser kinds, and other objects. Now peace prevails all over the world; the myriads of the population are living in harmony, and I and the Shen-yu alone are the parents of the people. On taking a retrospect of the past, I find trifling matters and minute causes have shaken the stability of subjects, and induced defective alligiance; all quite unworthy to mar the harmony that ought to exist between brethren.

"I have heard that heaven is impartial in its overshadowing, nor is earth one-sided in its supports. If you and I both forget the trifles of the by-gone, and walk together in the broad path, regardless of the evils that are past, uniting the people of the two nations as the children of one family, the great mass of the population will be blessed with peace and prosperity, while they will be preserved from perils; and the benefits will extend even to the lower creation, the denizens of the forest, the ocean and the firmament. Hence, in the future, let us not merely walk in the way of heaven, but overlook all that is past. I will freely pardon all my subjects who have run away or been carried captive; and let not the Shen-yu seek the rendition of Chang-ne and others who have submitted to the Han. It is said that the ancient kings and emperors made clear stipulations in the treaties, and were ever true to their words. Let your highness ponder well. After the conclusion of the treaty of peace throughout the world, take notice, the Han will not be the first to transgress."

The Shen-yu having ratified the treaty, the emperor notified the recorder, saying:--"The great Shen-yu of the Hsiung-nu has transmitted to me a letter signifying that the treaty of friendship is now settled. Let no man dispute the benefits either personally or as to territory. The Hsiung-nu shall not come within the stockades; Chinese subjects shall not pass beyond the stockades. Death is the penalty of transgression. Thus friendly relations may be long continued without a breach. I have sanctioned it; let it be widely circulated through the empire, that the matter may be clearly understood."

In 160, Laou-shang Shen-yu died, and was succeeded by his son Keun-shin Shen-yu, to whom Chung-hing Yue renewed his oath of alligiance, and the treaty of friendship with the Chinese was also renewed. The new chief, however, had been little more than a year in power, when the treaty was thrown to the winds, and he poured thirty thousand cavalry into Shang-keun, and a similar force into Yun-chung, killing and taking captive immense numbers of the people. Three Chinese generals were thereupon appointed, and the formation of military colonies was initiated... every assailable point on the borders was strengthened to repel the Hoo invaders. Three other generals were appointed to important military posts... north of the river Wei, to keep back the Hoo at those points. When the Hoo cavalry crossed the border at Kow-choo in Tae, the news was telegraphed to Kan-tseun and Ch'ang-an by beacon fires. It was a matter of months by the time the Chinese troops reached the border. The Hsiung-nu. were already far away beyond the stockades and the Chinese expedition came to an end.

In the summer of 157, the Emperor Wan-te died, and was succeeded by his son King-te. Scarcely had the new prince ascended the throne, when disaffection began to manifest itself among the feudal states. Suy the king of

Chaou sent a messenger secretly to enter into communication with the Hsiung-nu. Woo and Tsoo rebelled, and wished to unite with Chaou in a plot to invade the border. The emperor however surrounded and disabled Chaou; while the Hsiung-nu declined to join the confederation. Amicable relations were renewed between the Shen-yu and the Chinese court. A treaty was again signed, and a market was opened at the barrier. Presents were forwarded to the Hsiung-nu, and an imperial princess was sent to cement the alliance with the Shen-yu. The treaty was tolerably well observed throughout the reign of King-te ; towards the close there were some petty incursions on the borders, though there was no serious raid. [[Back to Contents](#)]

II. Relations with the Hsiung-nu in the Reign of Emperor Wu-ti [140-87 BCE]

Wu-ti ascended the throne in 140, the early years of his reign being marked by occasional irruptions of his northern neighbours. In 135, however, they requested a renewal of the treaty of peace, which was agreed to by the emperor after some deliberation, and an explicit declaration as to the stringency of the stipulations. The Hsiung-nu were treated liberally; the market at the barrier was continued, and handsome gifts were forwarded; so that from the Shen-yu downwards, the Hsiung-nu all became firmly attached to the Chinese, and confined their excursions to the outside of the Great Wall. An influence in an opposite direction, however, was at work at court, and within two years of the signing of the treaty a deep laid plot was set on foot by the Chinese, for cutting off the great body of the Hsiung-nu. Nee Yih, an old man, a native of Ma-yeh, was sent as it were clandestinely to negotiate with the Shen-yu. He pointed out to the latter the wealth that might be obtained by the capture of Ma-yeh, and pretended to sell the city to him. Allured by the prospect of gain, and trusting to the representations of Nee, the bait began to take. The Shen-yu entered the Woo-chow stockade with a hundred thousand mounted troops, while the Chinese had more than three hundred thousand troops lying in ambush in a valley near Ma-yeh. The high dignitary Han Gan-kwo was general of the covering force, to protect the four generals who were to draw the Shen-yu into the ambuscade. When then Shen-yu had entered the Chinese stockade, before he was within a hundred *li* of the Ma-yeh, he was astonished to see the cattle spread over the hills and no one to look after them. He attacked a military post, which was defended by the Commandant of Yed-mun, who happened to be then making his circuit. The latter was captured by the Shen-yu, who were about to run him through; but to save his life, he revealed the Chinese plot. At this revelation the Shen-yu became greatly alarmed, and exclaimed:--"Truly I expected something of this kind." He then drew off his troops, and returned, remarking, --"It was providential that I met with this commandant." He designated the commandant a heavenly king. The Chinese troops having confidently reckoned on the Shen-yu entering Ma-yeh, had relaxed their vigilance; but as he did not come, their scheme proved a great collapse. Discovering the state of matters, the general Wang Kwei led forward his forces beyond Tae, intending to overtake and capture the Hsiung-nu store waggons; but on hearing that the Shen-yu had returned, the greater part of the troops refused to proceed. Considering that Wang Kwei was the originator of this plot, and now having failed to follow up the fugitives, he was condemned to death by the emperor. From that time the treaty was abandoned by the Hsiung-nu, who attacked the stockades on the high road, and were constantly committing acts of brigandage on the border, too numerous to mention. They were very glad, however, to avail themselves of the market at the barrier, having become fond of Chinese commodities; and the Chinese were very desirous to cultivate this barrier traffic, as a means of enfeebling their rivals..... [[Back to Contents](#)]

III. The Mission to the West by Zhang Qian.

[Part of the Chinese strategy to rid themselves forever of the Hsiung-nu was to send an emissary to the west, to explore the possibility of alliance with Hsiung-nu enemies in Central Asia. What follows is the account of that mission by Zhang Qian (Chang K'ien), which is generally considered to have influenced significantly the Han decision to expand significantly to the West and develop the "Silk Road." The text then describes the military campaigns which brought part of the western regions under Han control.]

Our first knowledge of Ta-yuan [Ferghana] dates from Chang K'ien. Chang K'ien was a native of Han-chung [in the south of Shen-si province] ; during the period of K'ien-yuan [140-134 BCE] he was a *lang* [a titular officer of the imperial household; a yeoman]. At that time the Son of Heaven made inquiries among those Hsiung-nu who had surrendered [as prisoners] and they all reported that the Hsiung-nu had overcome the king of the Yue-chi and made a drinking-vessel out of his skull. The Yue-chi had decamped and were hiding somewhere, all the time scheming how to take revenge on the Hsiung-nu, but had no ally to join them in striking a blow. The Chinese; wishing to declare war on and wipe out the Tartars, upon hearing this report, desired to communicate with the Yue-chi; but, the road having to pass through the territory of the Hsiung-nu, the Emperor sought out men whom he could send. Chang K'ien, being a *lang*, responded to the call and enlisted in a mission to the Yue-chi; he took with him one Kan Fu, a Tartar, formerly a slave of the T'ang-i family, and set out from Lung-si [Kan-su], crossing the

territory of the Hsiung-nu. The Hsiung-nu made him a prisoner and sent him to the *Shan-yu* [Great Khan or King], who detained him, saying: 'The Yue-chi are to the north of us; how can China send ambassadors to them? If I wished to send ambassadors to Yue [Kiangsi and Ch'okiang], would China be willing to submit to us?' He held Chang K'ien for more than ten years, and gave him a wife, by whom he had a son.

All this time Chang K'ie'n had kept possession of the Emperor's token of authority, and, when in the course of time he was allowed greater liberty, he, watching his opportunity, succeeded in making his escape with his men in the direction of the Yue-chi. Having marched several tens of days to the west, he arrived in Ta-yuan. The people of this country, having heard of the wealth and fertility of China, had tried in vain to communicate with it. When, therefore, they saw Chang K'ien, they asked joyfully: 'Where do you wish to go?' Chang K'ien replied: 'I was sent by [the Emperor of] China to the Yue-chi, and was made prisoner by the Hsiung-nu. I have now escaped them and would ask that your king have some one conduct me to the country of the Yue-chi; and if I should succeed in reaching that country, on my return to China, my king will reward yours with untold treasures. The Ta-yuan believed his account and gave him safe-conduct on postal roads to K'ang-ku [Soghdiana], and K'ang-ku sent him on to the Ta-yue-chi. The king of the Ta-yue-chi having been killed by the Hu ['Tartars'; in this case the Hsiung-nu], the people had set up the crown prince in his stead [in the *Ts'ien-han-shu* it is the queen who is appointed his successor]. They had since conquered Ta-hia [Bactria] and occupied that country. The latter being rich and fertile and little troubled with robbers, they had determined to enjoy a peaceful life; moreover, since they considered themselves too far away from China, they had no longer the intention to take revenge on the Hu [Hsiung-nu]. Chang K'ien went through the country of the Yue-chi to Ta-hia [Bactria], yet, after all, he did not carry his point with the Yue-chi. After having remained there fully a year, he returned, skirting the Nan-shan. He wished to return through the country of the K'iang [Tangutans], but was again made a prisoner by the Hsiung-nu, who detained him for more than a year, when the Shan-yu died and the 'Left' Luk-li [possibly Turk. *Ulugla*, 'highly honored'] prince attacked the rightful heir and usurped the throne, thus throwing the country into a state of confusion. At this time Chang K'ien, with his Tartar wife and T'ang-i Fu [i. e. Kan Fu], escaped and returned to China.

[The Emperor of] China appointed Chang K'ien *T'ai-chung-ta-fu* ['Imperial Chamberlain'] and gave T'ang-i Fu the title *Fong-shi-kun* ['The Gentleman attending the Embassy']. Chang K'ien was a man of strong physique, magnanimous and trustful, and popular with the foreign tribes in the south and west. T'ang-i Fu was formerly a Hu [Tartar; Hsiung-nu?]. Being an excellent bowman, he would, when supplies were exhausted, provide food by shooting game. When Chang K'ien started on his journey, his caravan consisted of more than a hundred men; thirteen years later, only two lived to return. The following countries were visited by Chang K'ien in person: Ta-yuan [Ferghana], Ta-yue-chi [Indoscythians], Ta-hia [Bactria] and K'ang-ku [Soghdiana]; there were besides, five or six other large adjacent countries concerning which he gained information and on which he reported to the Emperor in the following terms.

Ta-yuan [Ferghana] is to the southwest of the Hsiung-nu and due west of China, at a distance of about 10,000 *li*. The people are permanent dwellers and given to agriculture; and in their fields they grow rice and wheat. They have wine made of grapes (p'u-t'au) and many good horses. The horses sweat blood and come from the stock of the *t'ien-ma* [heavenly horse, perhaps the wild horse]. They have walled cities and houses; the large and small cities belonging to them, fully seventy in number, contain an aggregate population of several hundreds of thousands. Their arms consist of bows and halberds, and they shoot arrows while on horseback. North of this country is K'ang-ku [Soghdiana]; in the west are Yue-chi; in the southwest is Ta-hia [Bactria]; in the northeast are the Wu-sun; and in the east Han-mi and Yu-tien [Khotan]. All the rivers west of Yu-tien flow in a westerly direction and feed the Western Sea; all the rivers east of it flow east and feed the Salt Lake [Lopnor]. The Salt Lake flows underground. To the south of it [Yu-tien] is the source from which the Ho [Yellow River] arises. The country contains much jadestone. The river flows through China; and the towns of Lou-lan and Ku-shi with their city walls closely border on the Salt Lake. The Salt Lake is possibly 5000 *li* distant from Chang-an. The right [i. e. western] part of the Hsiung-nu live to the east of the Salt Lake as far as the great wall in Lung-si. To the south they are bounded by the K'iang [Tangutans], where they bar the road [to China]. [To [Ferghana](#) in the "Notes on the Western Regions" (=WR)]

Wu-sun may be 2000 *li* northeast of Ta-yuan; its people are nomads [following their flocks of cattle], and have the same customs as the Hsiung-nu. Of archers they have several tens of thousands, all daring warriors. Formerly they were subject to the Hsiung-nu, but they became so strong that, while maintaining nominal vassalage, they refused to attend the meetings of the court. [To [Wu-sun](#) in WR]

K'ang-ku [Soghdiana] is to the northwest of Ta-yuan perhaps 2000 *li* distant. It also is a country of nomads with manners and customs very much the same as those of the Yue-chi. They have eighty or ninety thousand archers. The country is coterminous with Ta-yuan. It is small. In the south it is under the political influence of the Yue-chi; in the east, under that of the Hiung~nu. [To [Soghdiana](#) in WR]

An-ts'ai [Aorsi] lies to the northwest of K'ang-ku, perhaps at a distance of 2000 *li*. It is a nomad state, and its manners and customs in the main identical with those of K'ang-ku. It has fully a hundred thousand archers. The country lies close to a great sea [*ta-tso*, lit. 'great marsh,' the Palus Maeotis, i.e. the Sea of Azov] which has no limit, for it is the Northern Sea.

The *Ta-yue-chi* [Indoscythians] are perhaps two or three thousand *li* to the west of Ta-yuan. They live to the north of the K'ui-shui [Oxus]. South of them is Ta-hia [Bactria]; in the west is An-si [Parthia]; in the north, K'ang-ku [Soghdiana]. They are a nomad nation, following their flocks and changing their abodes. Their customs are the same as those of the Hsiung-nu. They may have one to two hundred thousand archers. In olden times they relied on their strength, and thought lightly of the Hsiung-nu; but when Mau-tun ascended the throne he attacked and defeated the Yue-chi. Up to the time when Lau-shang, Shan-yu of the Hsiung-nu, killed the king of the Yue-chi and made a drinking vessel out of his skull, the Yue-chi had lived between Dunhuang [now Sha-chou] and the K'i-lien [a hill southwest of Kan-chou-fu]. But when they were beaten by the Hsiung-nu, they fled to a distant country and crossed to the west of Yuan [Ta-yuan], attacked Ta-hia [Bactria], and conquered it. Subsequently they had their capital in the north of the K'ui-shui [Oxus] and made it the court of their king. The minority which were left behind and were not able to follow them, took refuge among the K'iang [Tangutans] of the Nan-shan, and were called *Siau-Yue-chi* (Small Yue-chi). [To [Ta Yue-she](#) in WR]

An-si [Parthia] may be several thousand *li* west of the Ta-yue-chi. The people live in fixed abodes and are given to agriculture; their fields yield rice and wheat; and they make wine of grapes. Their cities and towns are like those of Ta-yuan. Several hundred small and large cities belong to it. The territory is several thousand *li* square; it is a very large country and is close to the K'ui-shui [Oxus]. Their market folk and merchants travel in carts and boats to the neighboring countries perhaps several thousand *li* distant. They make coins of silver; the coins resemble their king's face. Upon the death of a king the coins are changed for others on which the new king's face is represented. They paint [rows of characters] running sideways on [stiff] leather, to serve as records. West of this country is T'iau-chi; north is An-ts'ai. [To [Parthia](#) in WR]

Li-kan [Syria] and *T'iau-chi* [Chaldea] are several thousand *li* west of An-si and close to the Western Sea. It [referring to T'iau-chi] is hot and damp. The inhabitants plow their fields, in which they grow rice. There is a big bird with eggs like jars. The number of its inhabitants very large and they have in many places their own petty chiefs; but An-si [Parthia], while having added it to its dependencies, considers it a foreign country. They have clever jugglers. Although the old people in An-si maintain the tradition that the Jo-shui and the Si-wang-mu are in T'iau-chi, they have not been seen there.

Ta-hia [Bactria] is more than 2000 *li* to the southwest of Ta-yuan, on the south bank of the K'ui-shui [Oxus]. The people have fixed abodes and live in walled cities and regular houses like the people of Ta-yuan. They have no great king or chief, but everywhere the cities and towns have their own petty chiefs. (49) While the people are shrewd traders, their soldiers are weak and afraid to fight, so that, when the Ta-yue-chi migrated westward, they made war on the Ta-hia, who became subject to them. The population of Ta-hia may amount to more than a million. Their capital is called Lan-shi, and it has markets for the sale of all sorts of merchandise. To the southeast of it is the country of *Shon-tu* [India]. Chang K'ien says [in his report to the Emperor]: 'When I was in Ta-hia, I saw there a stick of bamboo of Kiung [Kiung-chou in Ssi-ch'uan] and some cloth of Shu [Ssi-ch'uan]. When I asked the inhabitants of Ta-hia how they had obtained possession of these, they replied: "The inhabitant of our country buy them in Shon-tu [India]." Shon-tu may be several thousand *li* to the southeast of Ta-hia. The people there have fixed abodes, and their customs are very much like those of Ta-hia; but the country is low, damp, and hot. The people ride elephants to fight in battle. The country is close to a great river. According to my calculation, Ta-hia must be 12,000 *li* distant from China and to the southwest of the latter. Now the country of Shon-tu being several thousand *li* the southeast of Ta-hia, and the produce of Shu [Ssi-ch'uan] being found there, that country cannot be far from Shu. Suppose we send ambassadors to Ta-hia through the country of the K'iang [Tangutans], there is the danger that the K'iang will object; if we send them but slightly farther north, they will be captured by the Hsiung-nu; but by going by way of Shu [Ssi-ch'uan] they may proceed direct and will be unmolested by robbers.'

The Son of Heaven on hearing all this reasoned thus: Ta-yuan and the possessions of Ta-hia and An-si are large countries, full of rare things, with a population living in fixed abodes and given to occupations somewhat identical

with those of the Chinese people, but with weak armies, and placing great value on the rich produce of China; in the north the possessions of the Ta-yue-chi and K'ang-ku, being of military strength, might be made subservient to the interests of the court by bribes and thus gained over by the mere force of persuasion. In this way a territory 10,000 *li* in extent would be available for the spread among the four seas of Chinese superior civilization by communicating through many interpreters with the nations holding widely different customs. As a result the Son of Heaven was pleased to approve Chang K'ien's proposal. He thereupon gave orders that, in accordance with Cliang K'ien's suggestions, exploring expeditions be sent out from Kien-wei of the Shu kingdom [the present Su-chou-fu on the Upper Yangtzi] by four different routes at the same time: one to start by way of Mang; one by way of Jan [both names referring to barbarous hill tribes on the southwestern frontier]; one by way of Ssi [or Si] ; and one by way of Kiung [Kiung-chou in Ssi-ch'uan] and P'o [the present Ya-chou]. These several missions had each traveled but one or two thousand *li* when those in the north were prevented from proceeding farther by the Ti and Tso tribes, and those in the south by the Sui and K'un-ming tribes [placed by the commentators in the southwest of Si-chou-fu], who had no chiefs and, being given to robbery, would have killed or captured the Chinese envoys. The result was that the expeditions could not proceed farther. They heard, however, that about a thousand *li* or more to the west there was the 'elephant-riding country' called *Tien-yue* [possibly meaning 'the Tien,' or Yunnan, part of Yue or South China], whither the traders of Shu [Ssi-ch'uan] were wont to proceed, exporting produce surreptitiously. Thus it was that by trying to find the road to Ta-hia [Bactria] the Chinese obtained their first knowledge of the Tien country (Yun-nan).

The original idea to penetrate from China through the country of the southwestern barbarians was abandoned, because, in spite of the heavy expense incurred, the passage could not be effected; but it was in pursuance of Chang K'ien's report regarding the possibility of finding a road to Ta-hia [Bactria] that attention had again been drawn to these barbarians. It had been due to Chang K'ien's knowledge of their pasture-grounds, when following, in the capacity of a subcommander, the general-in-chief sent out against the Hsiung-nu, that the army did not fall short of provisions. For this the Emperor invested him with the title 'Marquis of Po-wang.' This was in the year 123 BCE. When, in the following year, Chang K'ien took part in the Yu-pei-p'ing [about 80 miles east of Peking] campaign against the Hsiung-nu in the capacity of a commander of the Guards under General Li [Li Kuang] as commander-in-chief and the latter was blocked by the enemy with considerable losses to his army, Chang K'ien failed to come soon enough to the rescue. For this he was liable to the penalty of death; but, on payment of a ransom, his punishment was reduced to degradation to the rank of a private. In the same year China sent the Pian-ki general (Ho K'u-ping) to conquer the western *ordu* [capital] of the Hsiung-nu. He took several tens of thousands [of troops] and pushed forward as far as the K'i-lien-shan [a hill in the south of the present Kan-chou-fu]. In the following year (121 BCE) the Hun-sho prince with all his people tendered his allegiance to China, and in the west of Kin-ch'ong [Lan-chou-fu] and in Ho-si [in the west of Kan-su] all along the Nan-shan as far as the Salt Lake [the Lopnor] there remained no Hsiung-nu. The Hsiung-nu would from time to time come there to waylay travelers, but such visitations were of rare occurrence indeed, and two years later the Chinese forced their khan to retreat into the north of the desert. The Son of Heaven thereupon consulted Chang K'ien several times about Ta-hia and other countries, and since K'ien had lost his marquisate he submitted the following report:

'When your servant was living among the Hsiung-nu, he heard that the king of the Wu-sun was styled *K'un-mo*, and that the K'un-mo's father was [chief of] a petty state on the western borders of the Hsiung-nu. The Hsiung-nu attacked and killed his father, and the K'un-mo, at his birth, was cast away in the wilderness, where meat was brought to him by a blackbird and a she-wolf nursed him with her milk. The Shan-yu regarded this as a wonder and, having raised the child to manhood, made him a military leader, in which capacity he distinguished himself on several occasions. The Shan-yu restored to him the people of his father and made him governor of the western *ordu* [city, or fortified camp]. On receiving charge of his people, the K'un-mo attacked the neighboring small states with tens of thousands of bowmen, gained experience in warfare, and, after the Shan-yu's death, withdrew his forces to a distant retreat, declining to appear at the court of the Hsiung-nu. The latter dispatched a force of picked troops to attack him, but, being unable to conquer him, regarded him as a spirit whom they had better keep at a distance and whom they would not seriously attack, though they continued to claim [nominal] jurisdiction of the Shan-yu over the K'un-mo. Now the Shan-yu has recently been defeated by China, in consequence of which the Hun-sho prince's former territory has become deserted; and since the barbarians covet the rich products of China, this is an opportune time to bribe the Wu-sun with liberal presents, and to invite them to settle farther east in the old Hun-sho territory. Should they become attached to the Chinese as a brother nation by intermarriage the situation would be in favor of their listening to our proposition, and if they do this, it would be tantamount to the cutting off of the right [i. e. western] arm of the Hsiung-nu nation. Once we are connected with the Wu-sun, the countries to the west of them might be invited to come to us as outer subjects.'

The Son of Heaven approved of Chang K'ien's proposal and appointed him a commander in his bodyguard as well as leader of an expedition consisting of 300 men, each with two horses, and oxen and sheep in myriads. He also provided him with gifts of gold and silk stuffs worth millions, and with assistant envoys, holding credentials, whom he might send to and leave behind in other nearby countries. When Chang K'ien arrived at Wu-sun, he keenly resented the humiliation offered to him, the ambassador of China, by a mere king of the Wu-sun, K'un-mo, in receiving him in audience with court ceremonial like that adopted with the Shan-yu of the Hsiung-nu. Knowing the greed of these barbarians, he said: 'If the king does not pay due respect to these gifts, which have come the Son of Heaven, they will be withdrawn.' The K'un-mo rose and offered obeisance before the gifts, but all other ceremonies passed off as of old. Chang K'ien explained the Emperor's ideas as follows: 'If the Wu-sun are able to move eastward to the country of the Hun-sho, China will send a princess to become the K'un-mo's consort.' The Wu-sun country was divided, for the King was old and, considering China very distant and being unaware of its greatness, had heretofore submitted to the Hsiung-nu, and this for a long time indeed. Moreover, his own country was also nearer them, so that his ministers, who were afraid of the Tartars, did not wish to move away, and, since the king was not free to arrive at a decision of his own choice, Chang K'ien was unsuccessful in inducing him to adopt his suggestion.

The K'un-mo had more than ten sons, the second of whom, called Ta-lu, was an energetic leader of the masses. In this capacity he set himself up in a separate part of the country with more than ten thousand horsemen. Ta-lu's elder brother, the crown prince, had a son called the *Ts'on-ts'u* [a title]. When the crown prince met with an early death, his last words to his father, the K'un-mo, were: 'Let the Ts'on-ts'u become crown prince, and do not allow any other man to take his place.' The K'un-mo, in his grief, consented; and so on the death of his father the Ts'on-ts'u became crown prince. Ta-lu was angry at being prevented from acting as crown prince and, having imprisoned his brothers, rose with his people in rebellion against the Ts'on-ts'u and the K'un-mo. The latter, being old, was in constant fear that Ta-lu might kill the Ts'on-ts'u; he therefore gave the latter more than ten thousand horsemen to settle elsewhere, while retaining the same number of horsemen for his own protection.

The population was thus divided into three parts; and, notwithstanding that the majority were under his authority, the K'un-mo did not dare to take it upon himself to conclude that treaty with Chang K'ien. Chang K'ien, therefore, sent assistant ambassadors in several directions to the countries of Ta-yuan [Ferghana], K'ang-ku [Soghdiana], Ta-yue-chi [Indoscythians], Ta-hia [Bactria], An-si [Parthia], Shon-tu [India], Yu-tien [Khotan], Han-mi [?] and the adjacent territories. Wu-sun furnished guides and interpreters to accompany Chang K'ien on his return, and the latter, traveling with several dozen natives and as many horses sent by the people of Wu-sun in acknowledgment [of the Emperor's gifts], thereby afforded them the opportunity to see China with their own eyes and thus to realize her extent and greatness. On his return to China Chang K'ien was appointed *Ta-hing* ['Great Traveler,' or head of the office of foreign affairs] with rank as one of the nine ministers of state. More than a year after this he died.

The envoys of Wu-sun, having seen that China was a very populous and wealthy country, reported to this effect on their return home, and this increased the estimation in which she was held there. More than a year later, some of the envoys whom Chang K'ien had sent to the Ta-hia countries returned with natives of those countries, and after this the countries of the Northwest began to have intercourse with China. Since Chang K'ien had been the pioneer in such intercourse, envoys proceeding to the West after him always referred to the Marquis of Po-wang as an introduction in foreign countries, the mention of his name being regarded as a guaranty of good faith. After the death of K'ien, the Hsiung-nu heard of China's relations with Wu-sun, at which they became angry and wished to make war on it. When China sent missions to Wu-sun, her ambassadors continually passed through the south of that country to Ta-yuan [Ferghana] and Ta-yue-chi [Indoscythians], and since the people of Wu-sun were afraid, they sent ambassadors and tribute horses, expressing their wish to bring about family relations by marriage with a Chinese imperial princess. The Son of Heaven consulted his ministers, who all said: 'Let them first offer marriage gifts and we shall then send the maiden.' At first the Son of Heaven consulted an oracle in the 'Book of Changes,' which said that 'the divine horse will come from the northwest.' The horses received from Wu-sun were termed 'heavenly horses,' but when the 'blood-sweating [*han-hue*] horses' obtained from Ta-yuan [Ferghana] were found much stronger, the name 'Wu-sun horses' was changed to '[horses of the] extreme west' and the Ta-yuan horses were called 'heavenly horses.'

At this time China began to build the great wall to the west of Ling-ku [near the present Liang-chou-fu in Kan-su], and first established the district of Tsiu-ts'uan, through which one could reach the countries of the Northwest. Thus more embassies were despatched to An-si [Parthia], An-ts'ai [the Aorsi, or Alans], Li-kan [Syria under the Seleucids], T'iau-chi [Chaldea], and Shon-tu [India], and as the Son of Heaven had such a fancy for the horses of Ta-yuan, ambassadors [sent to procure these horses] followed upon one another's heels all along the route. Such

missions would be attended by several hundred men, or by a hundred men, according to their importance. The gifts carried by them emulated in the main those sent in the time of the Marquis of Po-wang; but later on, when they had ceased to be a novelty, they were made on a smaller scale. As a rule, rather more than ten such missions went forward in the course of a year, and at the least five or six. Those sent to distant countries would return home after eight or nine years, those to nearer ones, within a few years.

This was the time when China had extinguished Yue, in consequence of which the barbarians in the southwest of Shu (Ssi-ch'uan) became alarmed and asked that Chinese officers be appointed, and attended court. Thus were created the districts of I-chou, Yue-sui, Tsang-ko, Shon-li, and Won-shan, [the government] being guided by the wish that these territories should form a link in the development of the route to Ta-hia [Bactria]. And so the envoys Pai Shi-ch'ang and Lu Yue-jon were sent out in more than ten parties in a single year from these newly founded districts for Ta-hia [Bactria], but again and again they were held up by the K'un-ming tribes, who killed them and robbed them of the presents they carried, so that they were never able to reach Ta-hia. Thereupon China raised an army from the convicts of the metropolitan district (*san-fu*) and sent the two generals Kuo Ch'ang and Wei Kuang in command of tens of thousands of soldiers of Pa and Shu [Ssi-chi'uan], to fight the K'un-mings who had intercepted the Chinese ambassadors, when several tens of thousands of the tribesmen were beheaded or made prisoners by the Chinese army before it withdrew. After this ambassadors sent to the K'un-ming were again robbed, and a passage through this country was still found to be impracticable. On the other hand, missions to Ta-hia [Bactria] by the northern route, via Tsiu-ts'uan, had by their frequency caused the foreign countries to be less and less interested in the Chinese ambassadorial gifts, which they no longer appreciated. Since the work of the Marquis of Po-wang in preparing the way for intercourse with foreign countries had earned for him rank and position, officials and attendants who had accompanied him vied with one another in presenting to the throne memorials in which they discussed the wonders, advantages, and disadvantages of certain foreign countries; and when the memorialists asked to be nominated as envoys, the Son of Heaven, on account of the extreme distance of the countries to be visited and owing to the scarcity of men expressing a willingness to go, would comply with such requests and would even provide credentials to candidates for ambassadorial posts without asking any questions as to whence they had come. In order to encourage enterprise in this direction numbers of embassies were fitted out and sent forward, though among those who returned there were bound to be some who had either purloined the presents entrusted to them or failed to carry out the imperial instructions.

The Son of Heaven on account of the experience of these quasi-envoys, would merely investigate cases as being highly criminal and punishable in order to stir up a feeling of resentment. By causing them to atone for their guilt [by payments?] they were led to apply again for ambassadorial appointments. Chances for such appointments now becoming numerous, those concerned in them made light of infringements of the law, and the lower officials connected with them would also give exaggerated accounts of the conditions of the foreign countries in question. Those who reported on some great projects in connection with foreign countries would be given plenipotentiary posts, whereas reports on less important ones would be rewarded with mere assistantships, for which reason reckless and unprincipled men became eager to follow examples thus set. The ambassadors, being mostly sons of poor families, appropriated the gifts sent by the government, and would undersell them for their private benefit. Foreign countries, in their turn, got tired of the Chinese ambassadors, whose tales consisted of conflicting accounts. They imagined that a Chinese army would not be near enough to reach them, and that they were free to annoy the Chinese ambassadors by cutting off their food supplies. The ambassadors were thus reduced to a state of starvation, and their exasperation took the form of actual hostilities. Lou-lan and Ku-shi, which, though merely small countries, were thoroughfares to the West, attacked and robbed the Chinese ambassadors [Wang K'ui and others] more than ever, and unexpected troops of the Hsiung-nu would at all times intercept westbound envoys. Ambassadors would therefore strive to outvie one another in spreading reports of the calamities threatening China from those foreign countries, which had walled cities and towns, but whose armies were weak and could easily be vanquished.

On this account the Son of Heaven sent the Tsung-piau marquis [*Chau*] Po-nu to lead some tens of thousands of cavalry of the feudal states and regular troops toward the Hsiung-nu River, wishing to engage the Tartars, but the latter retreated without giving battle. In the following year Po-nu attacked Ku-shi. He took the lead with more than seven hundred light cavalry, captured the king of Lou-lan, and defeated Ku-shi. He then displayed the prestige of his army in order to 'corner' Wiu-sun, Ta-yuan, and other countries. On his return, he was raised to the rank of a marquis of Tso-ye [in 108 BC]. Wang K'ui, who had been repeatedly ill-treated as an ambassador by Lou-lan, had reported this to the Son of Heaven, who raised an army and ordered him to assist Po-nu in bringing Lou-lan to terms. For this, Wang K'ui was made Marquis of Hau. A line of military stations was now established between Tsiu-ts'uan and the Yu-mon [Yumen] Gate. Wu-sun now presented a marriage gift of a thousand horses, upon

which China sent a relative of the emperor's, the Princess of Kiang-tu, as a consort for the king of the Wu-sun. The latter, the K'un-mo, appointed her his right [i. e. less-honored] consort. The Hsiung-nu, on their part, also sent a daughter in marriage to the K'un-mo, who appointed her his left [i. e. most-honored] consort. The K'un-mo said 'I am old,' and he induced his grandson, the Ts'on-ts'u, to marry the [Chinese] princess. The Wu-sun had a great store of horses; rich men had as many as four or five thousand each.

Once, when a Chinese ambassador had come to An-si[Parthia], the king of that country caused twenty thousand horsemen to welcome him at the eastern frontier, which was several thousand *li* distant from the royal capital. When he reached the capital he found that he had passed some dozens of walled cities, densely populated. When the ambassador returned to China they in their turn, sent envoys to accompany the mission back to China, in order that they might see China's greatness with their own eyes. They offered as tribute big birds' eggs [ostrich eggs] and jugglers from Li-kan [Syria, etc.]. And the small countries to the west of Yuan, namely Huan, Ts'ien, and Ta-i [?], and those to the east of Yuan, namely, Ku-shi, Han-mi, Su-hie, and others, followed the Chinese ambassadors with tribute and had audience with the Son of Heaven, who was thereby highly gratified. Also, a Chinese ambassador traced the source of the Ho River, which had its rise in Yu-tien [Khotan]. The hills there yielded great quantities of jadestone picked up and brought to China [by the ambassadors]. The Son of Heaven, in accordance with old maps and books, gave the name of K'un-lun to the hill in which the Ho River had its source.

At this time the Emperor often made tours of inspection to the seaside, when he was generally accompanied by numbers of foreign guests, upon whom he would bestow abundant provision, in order to impress them with the wealth of China. On such occasions crowds of onlookers were attracted by the performances of wrestlers, mummers, and all such wonderful entertainments, and by lavish feasts of wine and meat, by which the foreign guests were made to realize China's astounding greatness. They were also made to inspect the several granaries, stores, and treasuries, with a view to showing them the greatness of China and to inspiring them with awe. Later on the skill of these jugglers, wrestlers, mummers, and similar performers was further developed, their efficiency was increased from year to year. It was from this period that the coming and going of ambassadors of the foreign countries of the northwest became more and more frequent. The countries west of Yuan [Ferghana], which, being of the opinion that they were too far away from China, had as yet calmly stood upon their national pride, could not be won over by our polite civilization into a state of vassalage. Westward from Wu-sun as far as An-si [Parthia], the Hsiung-nu lived nearby, and since they had [once] been a source of trouble to the Yue-chi [Indoscythians], it was still a fact that if an envoy of the Hsiung-nu, armed with a letter of the Shan-yu, were sent abroad, all the countries *en route* would give him safe-conduct and provisions without daring to make trouble of any kind, whereas the ambassadors of China could not obtain provisions without a money payment, nor could they continue their journeys on horseback without buying the necessary beasts. The reason for this was that the people of these countries thought that, China being far off and wealthy, the Chinese must buy what they wished to get; indeed they were more afraid of the Hsiung-nu than of the Chinese ambassadors. In the neighborhood of Yuan [Ferghana] wine was made from grapes. Rich people stored ten thousand stones and more of it without its spoiling. The people liked to drink wine, and their horses liked lucerne (*mu-su=medicago sativa*). The Chinese envoys imported their seeds into China. The Son of Heaven thereupon first planted lucerne and vines on rich tracts of ground, and by the time that he had large numbers of 'heavenly' horses, and when many ambassadors from foreign countries arrived, by the side of Imperial summer palaces and other retreats one might see wide tracts covered with vineyards and lucerne fields.

The people occupying the tracts from Ta-yuan [Ferghana] westward as far as the country of An-si talked different dialects, but their manners and customs being in the main identical, they understood each other. They had deepset eyes, most of them wore beards, and as shrewd merchants they would haggle about the merest trifles. They placed high value on women, and husbands were guided in their decisions by the advice of their wives. These countries produced no silk and varnish, and they did not know the casting of coins and utensils. When some deserters from the retinue of a Chinese embassy had settled there as subjects they taught them how to cast weapons and utensils other than those that they already had. Having secured Chinese yellow and white metal [i.e. gold and silver], they used this for making utensils; they did not use it for money. And since Chinese ambassadors became numerous, the young men who had been attached to those missions would generally approach the Son of Heaven with [what seemed] a well worked-out project. Thus they reported 'The superior horses found in Ta-yuan are concealed [kept out of sight] in the city of Ir-shi, which is unwilling to give them to the Chinese ambassadors.' Now, since the Son of Heaven was fond of the horses of Ta-yuan, he was pleased with this report and sent certain strong men [sportsmen, turfmen?], Ch'o Ling and others, with a thousand pieces of gold and a golden horse in order to ask the king of Ta-yuan for the superior horses in the city of Ir-shi. The Yuan country being overstocked with Chinese produce, the people held counsel among themselves, saying: 'China is far away from us, and in the Salt Lake

[region] numbers of travelers have met with destruction. To the north of it one falls into the hands of the Hu [Tartar] robbers; in the south there is dearth of water and vegetation; moreover, they are everywhere cut off from cities without any chance of foraging in many cases Chinese missions, consisting of merely a few hundred members have quite commonly lost more than half their staff by starvation. If this be so, how much less could the Chinese send a big army? What harm can they do to us? The horses in Ir-shi are the most precious horses of Yuan.' And they refused to deliver the horses to the Chinese ambassadors. The latter became very angry and with scathing words smashed the golden horse and returned. The notables, in their turn, were incensed and said: 'The Chinese ambassadors have treated us with extreme contempt.' They ordered the envoys out of the country and caused them to be intercepted at Yu-ch'ong on the eastern frontier, where the ambassadors were killed and robbed of their belongings.

Upon hearing this the Son of Heaven was very wroth. The ambassadors previously sent to Yuan, namely Yan Ting-han and others, reported: 'The army of Yuan is weak; if we attack it with no more than three thousand Chinese soldiers using crossbows, we shall be sure to vanquish it completely.' The Son of Heaven, having previously sent the Marquis of Tso-ye with seven hundred cavalry to attack Lou-lan, with the result that the king of that country was captured, approved of the plan suggested by Yan Ting-han and others, and, wishing to bestow a marquisate on his favorite concubine, Madam Li, appointed Li Kuang-li leader of the campaign, with the title *Ir-shi tsiang-kun* [i. e. General Ir-shi] and ordered him to set out with six thousand cavalry of the feudal states and several hundred thousand men, being recruits selected from the riffraff of the provinces, and to march upon Yuan with the intent of advancing on the city of Ir-shi and taking possession of its superior horses, for which reason he was styled 'General Ir-shi.' Chau Shi-ch'ong was appointed *kun-chong* [adjutant-general?], the late Marquis of Han, Wang K'ui, was sent as a guide to the army, and Li Ch'o was appointed a governor in charge of the army regulations. This happened in the year 104 BCE. And great swarms of locusts arose to the east of the great wall and traveled west as far as Dunhuang. When the army of General Ir-shi had crossed the Salt Lake [Lop-nor] the small states on the road were alarmed; they strengthened their city defenses and refused the issue of provisions. Sieges were of no effect. If the cities surrendered, the army would secure provisions; if they did not, it would in the course of a few days retire. When it came to Yu-ch'ong, the Chinese army consisted of not more than a few thousand men, and these were exhausted from lack of food. At the siege of Yu-ch'ong the Chinese troops were utterly routed with great losses in killed and wounded. General Ir-shi with Li Ch'o, Chau Shi-ch'ong, and others reasoned thus: 'If our drive on Yu-ch'ong ended in failure to take the city, how much less can we advance on the king's capital? Consequently, after a campaign of two years the army was led back. When it reached Dunhuang only one or two out of every ten soldiers were left. The general sent a message to the Emperor in which he said: 'Owing to the distance of the expedition we often were short of provisions and our soldiers were troubled not so much by battles as by starvation; their numbers were not sufficient to conquer Yuan.' He proposed for the time being to stop the war and to set out again when better prepared. When the Son of Heaven heard this report he was much incensed and ordered the Yu-mon [Gate] to be closed, saying, 'If any members of the army dare to enter, they shall lose their heads.' Ir-shi was afraid and remained at Dunhuang. That summer [103 BCE] China had lost more than twenty thousand men of Tso-ye's army against the Hsiung-nu. The dukes, ministers, and councils called upon to deliberate all wished to give up the expedition against the army of Yuan and to direct special efforts to attacking the Tartars. The Son of Heaven [thought that] having sent a punitive expedition against Yuan, a small country, without bringing it to terms would cause Ta-hia [Bactria] and the like countries to feel contempt for China, and the superior horses of Yuan would never be forthcoming; also Wu-sun and Lun-t'ou would make light of harassing the Chinese ambassadors, [and China] would thus become the laughing stock of foreign countries. The Emperor therefore preferred an indictment against Tong Kuang and others who had reported that making war on Yuan was particularly inopportune, [and an army consisting of] ticket-of-leave men and sharpshooters, to whom were added the young riffraff and roughriders of the boundary, was organized within rather more than a year. When it left Dunhuang this army consisted of sixty thousand men, not counting those who followed as carriers of secret supplies of extra provisions; a hundred thousand oxen; more than thirty thousand horses; donkeys, mules, and camels numbering myriads, and a commissariat well stocked with provisions, besides arms and crossbows. All parts of the Empire had to bestir themselves in contributing offerings. In this campaign against Yuan no less than fifty military governors were appointed. In the city of the king of Yuan there were no wells, and the people had to obtain water from a river outside the city, whereupon experts in hydraulics were sent to divert the course of the river, thus depriving the city of water, besides effecting an opening through which the city might be laid open to access. In order to protect Tsiu-ts'uan, an additional contingent of a hundred eighty thousand frontier troops was stationed in the newly established districts of Ku-yen and Hiu-chu in the north of Tsiu-ts'uan and Chang-ye. There were further sent the offenders under the seven clauses of the law on minor offenses from the whole empire, as carriers of provisions for the Ir-shi expedition force; wagoners with their carts went in endless lines to Dunhuang; and in anticipation of the defeat of Yuan, two horse-breakers were appointed as equerries [with the rank of]

military governors to handle the superior horses to be selected. Thereupon [General] Ir-shi had to march out again, and since he had now more soldiers, the smaller countries he passed through did not fail to welcome him with provisions for his army. When he came to Lun-t'ou, however, that city would not submit, so, after a siege of a few days, it was laid in ruins. After this event the march to the west proceeded without impediment as far as the [outskirts of the] city of Yuan. On its arrival there the Chinese army consisted of thirty thousand men. An army of Yuan gave battle, the victory being gained by the efficiency of the Chinese archery; and this caused the Yuan army to take refuge in their bulwarks and mount the city walls. General Ir-shi wished to attack Yu-ch'ong, but was afraid his detention thereby would allow Yuan to resort to additional stratagems. He therefore went direct to Yuan, cut off the source of its water-supply by diverting the course of the river upon which it depended, and the city was in great straits. Yuan was invested by the Chinese for more than forty days. On battering the outer city wall they captured one of the notables of Yuan, a prominent leader named Tsien-mi.

The people of Yuan became panic-stricken and withdrew into the inner city, where their notables held counsel among themselves, saying: 'The reason why the Chinese make war on us is that our king, Mu-kua, held back the superior horses and killed the Chinese ambassadors. If we now kill our king, Mu-kua, and surrender the superior horses, the Chinese army will raise the siege; on the other hand, if they do not raise the siege there will be war to the death. It is not yet too late.' The notables of Yuan were all of this opinion. They therefore assassinated their king Mu-kua, and sent his head to General Ir-shi by their notables, saying: 'If the Chinese will cease making war on us, we will let you have all the superior horses you desire and will supply the Chinese army with provisions; but, if you do not accept our terms, we will kill all the superior horses and help will soon come from K'ang-ku [Soghdiana]. In that case we should keep within the city, while K'ang-ku would keep outside, fighting against the Chinese army, which ought carefully to consider as to the course it will adopt.' In the meantime K'ang-ku kept watch on the Chinese army, and, this being still numerous, did not dare to attack. General Ir-shi consulted with Chan Shi-ch'ong and Li Ch'o. It was reported that Yuan had recently secured the services of a Chinese [lit. 'a man of Ts'in'] who knew how to bore wells, and that the city was still well supplied with provisions; that the chief malefactor whom they had come to punish, was Mu-kua, whose head had already come to hand; and that, if under the circumstances they did not raise the siege, Ta-yuan would make strenuous efforts to defend the city, while K'ang-ku would lie in wait until the Chinese were worn out, and then come to the rescue of Yuan, which would mean certain defeat to the Chinese army. The officers of the army agreed with these views. Yuan was allowed to make a treaty. They delivered up their superior horses and permitted the Chinese to make a selection from them, besides furnishing great quantities of provisions for the commissariat. The Chinese army took away several dozens [*shu-shi*, 'several times ten'] of superior horses, besides more than three thousand stallions and mares of inferior quality. They also appointed a notable of Yuan, named Mei-ts'ai, who had formerly treated the Chinese ambassadors well, as king of Yuan, with whose swearing-in the campaign ended. After all, the Chinese were unable to enter the inner city, and, abandoning further action, the army was led back.

When General Ir-shi first started to the west from Dunhuang, the countries *en route* were unable to furnish provisions, owing to the size of his army. He therefore divided it now into several sections, which took the southern and northern routes respectively. The military governor, Wang Shon-shong and the former superintendent of the Colonial Office, Hu Ch'ung-kuo, with more than a thousand men, marched by another route to Yiu-ch'ong, whose city head refused the issue of provisions to the army. Wang Shon-shong, though he was two hundred *li* distant from the main body of the army, reconnoitered, but made light of the situation, while upbraiding the people of Yu-ch'ong. The latter persisted in refusing the issue of provisions and, having ascertained by spies that Wang Shon-shong's army was becoming reduced in numbers day by day, they one morning attacked the latter with three thousand men, killed Wang Shon-shong and the other leaders, and routed his army, of which only a few men escaped with their lives to rejoin General Ir-shi and the main army. General Ir-shi now entrusted Special Commissioner of Government Grain Shang-kuan Kie with the investment of Yu-ch'ong, whose king fled to K'ang-ku, pursued thither by Shang-kuan Kie. K'ang-ku had received the news of China's victory over Ta-yuan and delivered the fugitive king to Shang-kuan Kie, who sent him well bound and guarded by four horsemen to the commander-in-chief. On their way these men said to one another: 'The king of Yu-ch'ong is China's bitterest enemy. If we now let him live, he will escape, and then we shall have failed in an important undertaking.' Although wishing to kill him, none of the four dared to strike the first blow, when a cavalry officer of Shang-kui, named Chau Ti, the youngest among them, drew his sword and cut off the king's head. He and Shang-kuan Kie with the king's head then rejoined the commander-in-chief.

When General Ir-shi set out for the second time, the Son of Heaven had sent ambassadors to call upon Wu-sun to send big forces for a joint attack on Ta-yuan. Wu-sun sent only two thousand men, cavalry, wavering between two courses of action and being unwilling to proceed. When the smaller countries through which General Ir-shi passed

on his return march to the east heard of the defeat of Ta-yuan, they all sent sons and younger brothers [of their kings] to follow the Chinese army in order to be presented to the Son of Heaven and to be offered as hostages to China. In the campaign under General Ir-shi against Ta-yuan the *Kun-chong* [Adjutant General?] Chau Shi-ch'ong's chief merit had consisted in vigorous fighting; Shang-kuan Kie had distinguished himself by daring to break into the enemy's lines; Li Ch'o had acted as adviser in strategical schemes; and when the army passed the Yu-mon Gate there were left of it scarcely more than ten thousand men and a thousand horses. In the second campaign the army had not suffered so much from the scarcity of provisions, nor from losses in battle, as from graft practised by leaders and officers, many of whom filled their pockets without any regard for the welfare of the rank and file, numbers of whom had under these conditions lost their lives. In consideration of the fact that the campaign had to be conducted at a distance of ten thousand *li* from home, the Son of Heaven overlooked these offenses and created Li Kuang-li Marquis of Hai-si; further... all acts of bravery were rewarded by official positions exceeding the expectations of the recipients. Former convicts who had gone with the army received no rewards. Soldiers of the rank and file were presented with gifts of the value of forty thousand *kin* [pieces of gold]. Four years were required to finish the entire campaign against Yuan, from its beginning to the second return of the armies.

Rather more than a year after the conquest of Ta-yuan by China, when Mei-ts'ai was invested as king of Ta-yuan, the notables of that country, attributing the reverses of their country to his method of flattering the ambassadors, conspired against Mei-ts'ai, assassinated him, and installed Ch'an-fong, a younger brother of Mu-kua, as king of Yuan. They sent his son as a hostage to China, and China returned a conciliatory mission with presents. China subsequently sent more than ten embassies to the foreign countries west of Ta-yuan, to collect curiosities and at the same time to press upon such countries the importance of the victory over Ta-yuan and the establishment of a *tu-yu* [military governor?] at Tsiu-ts'uan in the Dunhuang region. Westward from here to the Salt Lake [Lopnor] the road at many points was protected by military stations, and in Lun-t'ou there were several hundred soldiers stationed as farmers, the special commissioners in charge of the farms being required to guard the cultivated land and to store the crops of grain for the use of embassies sent abroad.

Concluding remarks of the historian.--It is said in the *Yu-pon-ki*: 'The Ho [i.e. the Yellow River] rises in the K'un-lun, the ascent of which occupies more than two thousand five hundred *li*. [This hill is so high that] the light of sun and moon may be obscured by its shadow. Its summit contains the spring of sweet wine and the pool of jade.' Now, since by the expedition of Chang K'ien, to Ta-hia [Bactria] the source of the Yellow River has been traced, we ask, Where do we see the K'un-lun, mentioned in the 'Life of Yu'? Indeed, the account of the nine Provinces of the Emperor Yu, with their hills and water-courses, as described in the *Shu-king*, is much nearer the truth. As regards the wonderful tales contained in the 'Life of Yu' and the *Shan-hai-king*, I do not dare to say anything about them.

[Meanwhile, as Han preparations for expanding west were underway, the relations with the Hsiung-nu remained strained. To keep them pacified, the Chinese began to increase the amount of "gifts," the quantities of which surely have to have far exceeded the needs of the Hsiung-nu and must therefore have served as the basis for the latter to engage in long-distance trade with other regions.]

...The Hsiung-nu did not deem it advisable at that time to attempt any further incursions on the Chinese borders, preferring to recruit the strength of their men and horses; while keeping up their efficiency by the practice of hunting and archery. Several times they sent envoys to China with plausible tales and fair words, requesting a treaty of peace. As a result of these applications Wang Woo was sent with special instructions to note their condition. Now it was a rule with the Hsiung-nu that unless an envoy would forego his national etiquette and have his face tattooed he could not be admitted into the grand tent of the Shen-yu. Wang Woo, who was a northern man, and well versed in Hsiung-nu customs, felt no scruple in complying with these conditions. Admitted into the grand tent he soon found his way into the good graces of the Shen-yu. The latter, during his intercourse with the Chinese, having learnt something of the art of dissimulation, sent Wang back with the false assurance that if they would consent to a treaty he would send his eldest son to the Chinese court as a hostage.

The Chinese were not indifferent to the above proposal, and in the course of the year 109 [BCE] Yang Sin was sent on a mission to arrange with the Shen-yu about carrying it into effect. The course of events about this time was not such as to reassure the Hsiung-nu chief. The Chinese had just subjugated the kingdoms of Hwuy-mih and Corea on the east, and annexed these territories to the empire, while they had established the region of Tseu-tseuen on the west [in Kansu], as a barrier against the incursions of the Hoo; and to afford facilities of intercourse with the Keang. They had also opened up a caravan route to the kingdoms of the Massagetae and Ta-hea [Bactria]. An

imperial princess had moreover been bestowed upon the king of Wu-sun, one of the States subject to the Hsiung-nu, from whom the Chinese intended to transfer the allegiance to themselves. As a further means of effecting this they erected a stockade at Heuen-luy, considerably to the north; while the Hsiung-nu did not dare to offer any opposition. The same year Chaou Sin the Marquis of Heih died; and taking all these things into consideration the Chinese diplomatists, in view of the weakened condition of the Hsiung-nu, thought it a favourable time to get them to accept the relation of a subject nation. Yang Sin was firm, straightforward, and one who would not be diverted from his purpose; but hitherto he had not filled any high official post. When the Shen-yu coolly ordered him to enter, the latter refused to forego his national etiquette, whereupon the chief sat down outside the grand tent to give him an audience. Yang Sin opened his commission by stating that China was willing to enter into a treaty on his proposed condition, that he should send his eldest son as a hostage. The Shen-yu replied:--"Treaties were not so made in other days. Formerly it was the custom for China to send an imperial princess, with presents of raw and wrought silk, besides comestibles of various descriptions as a token of amity; and the Hsiung-nu on their part refrained from molesting the borders. But now it seems the ancient order is to be abandoned; and you wish me to send my eldest son as a hostage, without the hope of any equivalent. Besides, when China sends an envoy to the Hsiung-nu they are accustomed to send a man of high rank." At this point the literary attendant was about to offer a remark, but the chief abruptly cut short all discussion, and the young man was terrified lest the chief should run him through. The Shen-yu continued:--"Whenever the Chinese troops have entered the Hsiung-nu territory, the latter have promptly sought reprisals for the injury. When the Chinese have retained the Hsiung-nu envoy, the Hsiung-nu have also retained the Chinese envoy, which is but a fair equivalent, and they desire no more on the present occasion." On the return of Yang Sin to China, reporting the ill success of his mission, Wang Woo was again despatched, to remind the Shen-yu of his promise. He was received by the latter with a profusion of fair words, intimating without disguise his desire for a good supply of Chinese objects, while the chief craftily observed to the envoy:--"It is my wish to go to China and have a personal interview with the Son of Heaven; thus to ratify the eternal bond between us." When Wang Woo carried back this message to China a hotel of appropriate style was built for the reception of the Shen-yu in Ch'ang-an the metropolis. The Hsiung-nu chief, however, sent one of his nobles to China, and desired him to say that unless China sent an envoy of equal rank he would not discuss the question in earnest with him. While in the metropolis the Hsiung-nu envoy fell sick, and was put in the doctor's hands, but died under the medical treatment. Loo Ch'ung-kwo, stipendiary of 2,000 piculs, who wore the corresponding insignia, was appointed to escort the funeral home, with presents of thick silk to the value of several thousand taels. The Shen-yu declared the Chinese had killed the nobleman his envoy, and consequently detained Loo Ch'ung-kwo. It was now evident to the Chinese that the Shen-yu had been merely deluding Wang Woo with false pretences, and never had any idea of sending his son to China as a hostage.

After this the Hsiung-nu, on several occasions sent small parties of troops, to make incursions on the Chinese border. In view of these troubles, in the summer of 107, the Hoo-eradicating general Ko Chang and Chaou Po-noo the Marquis of Tsoya, were commissioned to establish military colonies from Suh fang eastward, to defend the borders against the Hoo raids.

In the autumn of 105 Woo-wei Shen-yu died, in the tenth year of his reign, leaving his son Woo-sze-loo a mere stripling, as his successor, who was always spoken of as the Boy Shen-yu. From this time the Hsiung-nu continued their migrations to the north-west. The Left wing of their army was now in the meridian of Yun-chung, while the right wing was even with Tsew-tseuen and Dunhuang.

[After further military campaigns, in which the Hsiung-nu inflicted a serious defeat on the Chinese,]

...Next year the Shen-yu addressed a letter to the Chinese monarch in these terms:--"In the south is the great Han; in the north is the formidable Hoo. The Hoo is the haughty son of heaven, who does not trouble himself about petty formalities. Now I wish to form a durable bond of union, by taking to wife one of the daughters of China. My proposal is, that China shall transmit to me yearly, ten thousand piculs of wine, five thousand bushels of millet and rice, ten thousand pieces of silk of various kinds, and other objects as in former treaties; then I will guarantee the exemption of the borders of the empire from raids and robbery." On receipt of this epistle, the Chinese sent an envoy back with the Hsiung-nu, bearing an answer. The drift of the Chinese missive is not recorded, but from the absence of all further notice of the matter, we may infer it was unfavourable. The Shen-yu seems to have taken a pleasure in setting those about him to twit the Chinese envoy. ...The feeling of the Shen-yu may be inferred from the fact that he detained this envoy three years.

...In the beginning of the year 87, the Emperor Wu-ti died, and was succeeded by Chaou te. [[Back to Contents](#)]

IV. Relations with the Hsiung-nu Following the Reign of Emperor Wu-ti.

For more than twenty years past, the Chinese troops had been pursuing the Hsiung-nu, and had continued to follow them up far into their northern retreats; so that at the foaling season, mares and cattle had to drop their young by the way, and nearly the whole had perished; thus reducing the people to the extremest misery. From the Shen-yu downwards, there had been a general desire among all classes to have a treaty of peace; and about three years subsequent to this, when they had come to a determination to send a request to China, the Shen-yu fell sick and died, near the end of the year 85.

[The military tide begins to turn in the Chinese favor; here we see the role of the beacon towers in warning against invasion.]

...In the year 78 more than three thousand Heng-noo cavalry entered Woo-yuen, where they killed and captured several thousand people. Subsequently several tens of thousands of cavalry came southwards on a hunting expedition in the neighbourhood of the stockades; attacked the fortresses and look-out towers outside the stockades, and carried off the officials and people. At that time the beacon fires could be distinctly seen along the border regions of the empire; so that the Hsiung-nu got little advantage by their marauding incursions; and they seldom afterwards ventured on the stockades. The Chinese had recently received the submission of some of the Hsiung-nu...

[With their fortunes at low ebb and no longer under unified leadership, and the power of the Han having reached well into Eurasia, the Hsiung-nu debated the idea of formal submission. This passage of the Han history recounts the deliberations and what follows. There is a noteworthy change of attitude on the part of the Chinese toward the "barbarian" ruler.]

...The Left E-ts'ew-tsze then addressed the assembly to this effect:--" Your counsel is not good. Periods of strength and weakness alternate in the history of nations. Now is the period of China's prosperity; Wu-sun with its dependencies, and the other kingdoms have all become subject to it. Ever since the time of Tseay-te-how Shen-yu, the Hsiung-nu have been gradually dwindling down, and can never regain their former status. Although we exhaust ourselves striving after that, we shall never enjoy a day's repose. Now if we submit to China, our nation will be preserved in peace; but if we refuse to submit, we are running into perdition. We cannot avert this by our plans." This speech was followed by a stormy discussion among the magnates.

After long deliberating on the question, Hoo-han-seay ultimately resolved to follow the counsel of the Left E-ts'ew-tsze. Accordingly, in the year 53, he led his army southward to the neighbourhood of the stockades, and sent his son, the Right Sage Prince Choo-low-keu-tang, to reside at the Chinese court as a token of submission. Che-che Shen-yu likewise sent his son, the Right Great General Keu-yu-li-show, to reside at the court of China.

During the whole of the following year Hoo-han-seay Shen-yu was encamped outside the Woo-yuen stockade, waiting for a formal admission to pay court to the Emperor of China in person.

The New-year audience of 51 was to be one of signal honour, as marked by the submission of one of the principal potentates of Eastern Asia, and the ceremonial arrangements were on a corresponding scale. The Chariot Cavalry Commandant, Han Chang, was deputed to escort the chieftain. The route by which it was arranged he should pass lay through seven regions, to each of which two thousand cavalry were appointed to line the highway on both sides as far as the Kan-tseuen Palace, where the Shen-yn had the privilege of prostrating himself before the Son of Heaven. Extraordinary rites were decreed in his honour on the occasion, and his rank was fixed above all the lords and princes of the empire. His act of submission was pronounced with eulogium, without mentioning any name. The imperial gifts were presented, consisting of a cap, a sash, a suit of garments, the gold seal of investiture with an azure ribbon, a jade-ornamented sword, a dagger, a bow, four arrows, ten lances in covers, a chariot, saddle and bridle, fifteen horses, twenty pounds weight of gold, two hundred thousand coins of the realm, seventy-seven suits of inner clothing, eight thousand pieces of embroidered, figured, and variegated silk, and six thousand pounds of raw silk. When the ceremonial was concluded, a commissioner was appointed to conduct the Shen-yu to his lodging for the night at Chang-ping; the Emperor himself went to pass the night at Che-yang Palace. On reaching Chang-ping, the Shen-yu was instructed not to proffer the rites of hospitality. His Right and Left Tang-hoos and all his ministers ranged themselves along the road to see the cortege, while the barbarian princes, chiefs, marquises, and lords, to the number of several tens of thousands, all lined the road on both sides below the Wei Bridge, and as His Majesty ascended the bridge they all shouted, "Long live the Emperor."

The Shen-yu next proceeded to his hotel at Ch'ang-an, the capital, and after a stay of somewhat over a month, he was conducted on his way back. The Shen-yu requested permission to stay outside the Kwang-luh

(banqueting-house) stockade, that he might protect the Surrender city of the Chinese in case of emergency. The Chinese sent as an escort the Chang-lo Director of the Guards, the Marquis of Kaou-chang Tung Chung, and the Chariot Cavalry Commandant, Han Chang, with sixteen thousand cavalry. There were also considerably over a thousand of the border region troops and horses, who convoyed the chief beyond the Ke-juh stockade in Suh-fang. The Emperor ordered Tung Chung and his colleagues to leave a guard with the Shen-yu, to punish any refractory conduct. From first to last thirty-four thousand bushels of grain, rice, and dried provisions were distributed to the retainers. The same year Che-che Shen-yu also sent an envoy with offerings, who was received and treated with great liberality by the Chinese.

In the year 50 both the Shen-yus sent envoys to China to pay court, with offerings. The greatest favours were conferred upon the representative of Hoo-han-seay.

The following year Hoo-han-seay again attended the audience in person, when the ritual and the gifts were the same as on the previous occasion, with the addition of a hundred and ten coats, nine thousand pieces of embroidered silk, and eight thousand pounds of raw silk. As there were now military colonies, no cavalry escort was sent with him... [[Back to Contents](#)]

V. A Chinese Memorial Discussing Strategy of the Building and Maintaining of the Great Wall.

[The following passage is of interest for two reasons. First, the Chinese respect for the Hsiung-nu had now dwindled to the point where one of the emperor's concubine's was considered to be an acceptable present. Second, the perhaps disingenuous proposal of the Hsiung-nu leader that he be invested to defend the Han fortifications evoked an interesting appraisal of that system of defense and its history of development in Han times.]

...In the beginning of the year 33, the Shen-yu made his promised visit to the metropolis of China, and again had the opportunity of prostrating himself before the Emperor. The same gifts were bestowed upon him as on the first occasion, with additional favours of clothes, embroidery, silk stuffs, and raw silk, all double the amount of the additional gifts in 49. The Shen-yu then expressed his desire for an alliance with China by marriage. Yuen-te assented, and conferred on him Wang Tseang, a lady from his harem, from a family of position, with the epithet of Chaou-keun. The Shen-yu was delighted with his acquisition, and advancing in confidence, addressed a letter to the Emperor, proposing that the stockades on the border of the empire, from Shang-kuh westward as far as Dunhuang, should all be placed under the protection of himself and his successors in perpetuity, and that the employment of the native troops and guards should be suspended; thus relieving the Emperor and his people from all anxiety. The proposal was handed over to the proper board for consideration, and was almost unanimously approved. The Gentleman-usher How, alone, handed in a memorandum dissenting from the project. The Emperor requesting a detailed statement of his views, he laid the following memorial, with ten objections, before the throne:

1. The ferocities and cruelty of the Hsiung-nu have been notorious from the time of the Chow and the Tsin, which were harassed by their marauding border incursions; and at the accession of the Han their depredations became still more audacious. Your servant understands that outside the northern border stockades, as far as Liaou-tung, for more than a thousand *li* from east to west, runs the Yin mountain range, covered with dense forests and prolific vegetation, where birds and beasts are profusely abundant. This was the cover under which Maou-tun Shen-yu at first took shelter, to manufacture his bows and arrows, and from which he issued to make his raids. In the reign of the Emperor Wu, troops were raised to chastise the barbarians, who expelled them and took possession of that country. The Hsiung-nu were then driven north into the desert. Stockades were erected to mark the boundary, the roads were skirted with look-out towers, extra-mural cities were built, and military colonies were established for protection. After this there were intervals of peace on the border. The desert country on the north is level, covered with coarse sand, and very little wood or vegetation, so that when the Hsiung-nu came marauding, there was scarcely anything to conceal them. From the stockades southward the roads lie deep among the hills and valleys, and the passage is beset with uncommon difficulties. Men of age and experience on the borders remark, that since the Hsiung-nu lost the Yin mountains, their trespasses have invariably been unsuccessful. If now we abandon the frontier and stockade guard, we shall give a great advantage to the barbarians.

2. The sacred virtue of our dynasty, expansive as the heavens, overshadows even the Hueng-noo, and these, in acknowledgment of the great blessings of their life and well-being, have come to prostrate themselves before the throne. Now, it is the disposition of barbarians to be humble and tractable in the time of their distress, but haughty and refractory at the period of their strength. The extra-mural cities have been abandoned, and the look-out towers along the roads left to ruin, so that now we have no means of distant observation, and the beacon fires are our only reliance. Were they not formerly blind to the dangers of the future?

3. China is an empire enjoying the benefits of civilisation and instruction, and has also its pains and penalties for criminals. Still there are besotted people who transgress the statutes. How much less is the Shen-yu able to prevent his people breaking the treaty?
4. When barriers and bridges were first constructed in China, they were intended as a check upon the princes of the empire, in order to restrain the covetous graspings of officials. Stockades were erected and colonies planted, not merely on account of the Hsiung-nu, but also on account of the people from the various subject kingdoms who have tendered their allegiance. These, being formerly subjects of the Hsiung-nu, it is possible the revival of old associations might induce in them the thought of absconding.
5. Recently the Western Keang [Eastern Tibetans] who were protecting the stockades, established an intercourse with the Chinese; and in their rapacity the border guard invaded the people, robbed them of their cattle, and carried off their wives and children. A fierce animosity has thus been generated, the people have risen against their oppressors, and a state of things has come about which generations will be unable to repair. Now, should the native guard of the stockades be suspended, any slight misunderstanding may be easily aggravated into a prolonged contention.
6. Formerly numbers of those who followed the army were killed, and their children, having fallen into poverty and distress, will be on the alert to seize an opportunity to abscond in search of their relatives.
7. Many borderers and slaves, male and female, who are living in abject misery, hear of the freedom and happiness of the Hsiung-nu, and, never thinking how it will fare with them in the day of adversity, will be ready to avail themselves of an opportunity to abscond by the stockades.
8. Thieves and brigands, bold and merciless, will combine in bands to break the laws, and, when driven into straits, will make escape by the north, and thus set all authority at defiance.
9. It is now more than a century since the stockades were erected, during which time the work of leveling the roads has been progressing. Precipices have been bridged, watercourses have been trained, and the roads have gradually become practicable. The merit of the troops in these constructions during this long period is incalculable. Your servant is afraid your advisers have not taken the whole history of the question into their deepest consideration. Suppose you dispense with all the dependent border guards; then, if after ten years, and within a century from this time, a revolution takes place among the troops, the fortresses and stockades being destroyed, and the look-out towers and roads demolished and gone to decay, it will be needful again to send military colonies to restore them. No, the meritorious service of past generations must not be utterly abandoned.
10. If the border troops are suspended, and the look-out towers dispensed with, while the Shen-yu himself defends the stockades and protects the imperial domain, he must have a heavy claim on the obligations of China, and his requests will accordingly be incessant. If his desires are not fully complied with, then it is impossible to foresee the result. When a quarrel is commenced with the barbarians, the security of China is not to be relied on. This is not the way to maintain a lasting peace, nor is it a wise policy in reference to the treatment of barbarous nations.

This memorial approved itself to the monarch's judgment, and he stayed all further deliberation regarding the abandonment of the border stockades....

[At a later moment, when relations with the Hsiung-nu once again were tense, the Chinese government was deliberating whether to placate them.]

Formerly, in planning the government of the western regions, when a protector-general of cities and villages was located in the Keu-sze country, with thirty-six kingdoms under his rule, at an annual expense to the empire of some myriads of taels, who could have calculated that Sogdiana and Wu-sun would have crossed the white dragon mound, and made a plundering incursion on the western border? Now, in governing the Hsiung-nu, if the laborious efforts of a hundred years are to be lost in one day--if one is to be secured at the expense of ten--it is your servant's humble opinion that this will not tend to the peace of the country. May your Majesty reflect a little on this subject, that so calamities may be averted from the people on the borders, ere the turbulence has broken out, or war has been declared!" When this memorial was presented the Emperor was aroused to a consciousness of his position. He ordered the Hsiung-nu envoy to be recalled, and addressed a letter to the Shen-yu, assenting to his proposal. To Yang Heung he gave fifty pieces of silk and ten pounds weight of gold. Before the Shen-yu set out, he fell sick, and sent another envoy, expressing a desire that his audience might be deferred till next year. On former occasions,

when the Shen-yu came to court, he was accompanied by princes of renown and subordinates, with attendants to the number of more than two hundred in all. The Shen-yu now forwarded a despatch, saying that in reliance on the sacred intelligence of the Emperor, whose people were numerous and strong, he wished to bring five hundred men to court with him, that they might witness the glory of the Son of Heaven. The request was granted.

In the year BCE 1, the Shen-yu came to attend the audience; but the Emperor, finding the malign influences of the year stationed in the duodenary cycle resting on his court, removed to the Grape-vine Palace in the forest garden, and gave orders that the Shen-yu was to be treated with more than ordinary consideration. The Shen-yu acknowledged the honour, and received an additional gift of three hundred and seventy coats, thirty thousand pieces of embroidered, figured and variegated silks, thirty thousand pounds of raw silk, with other objects, the same as in 25. ... [[Back to Contents](#)]

VI. A Chinese Memorial Arguing Against Campaigns Deep into Hsiung-nu Territory.

[With the outbreak of new hostilities with the Hsiung-nu, the Emperor began to gather an army to pursue them far into their own territories. This undertaking provoked an interesting memorial regarding the wisdom of such a policy.]

Wang Mang, having but recently assumed the imperial authority, sought to impart a dignity to his reign, in reliance on the wealth of the treasury. He appointed twelve Divisional Leaders, made a levy of the most courageous troops from the different kingdoms, and picked soldiers from the military depots, which were placed in military colonies, to be drafted off to the border. The intention was to collect an army of three hundred thousand, and having prepared provisions for three hundred days, to issue simultaneously by ten different roads, and pursue the Hsiung-nu to the last extremities, till they were driven back upon the Ting-ling, and then divide the land among fifteen of the descendants of Hoo-han-seay. At this juncture Wang Mang's General, Yen Yew, laid the following remonstrance before the throne: "Your servant has learnt that the Hsiung-nu are a trouble of very old standing, but he has not heard that it was thought necessary, in remote ages, to send troops against them. In later times the Chow, Tsin, and Han undertook to subdue them, but their policy was not of the highest order. The Chow acted on a second-rate policy, the Han was guided by a policy of the lowest kind, and the Tsin cannot be said to have had any policy at all. In the time of Seu-en-wang of the Chow, the Hsienyun invaded the inner land as far as King-yang; but a General having been commissioned to subjugate them, he succeeded in completely expelling them from the country. An invasion by the barbarians from the north or west may be compared to the pest of mosquitoes, which can only be driven away. Hence the empire got a reputation for intelligence; and this was a policy of a medium character. Wu-ti of the Han selected his generals and trained troops, made preparation of light provisions, and penetrated far in among the distant barbarian tribes. Although merit was obtained by conquest and capture, the Hoo immediately retaliated, and for more than thirty years there was a continuous succession of military calamities. The resources of China were reduced, and the Hsiung-nu were cut down. The empire attained a military reputation; but this was the lowest order of policy. The Emperor Che of the Tsin could not bear disgrace, and, lightly using up the strength of the people, built the Great Wall for security, extending a distance of ten thousand *li*. He also opened up ways for the transport of taxes, from the sea-coast to the uttermost extremities of the land. When the work was completed, China was exhausted within, and the spirits of the land and grain were neglected. This could not be considered a policy at all. Now the empire is on the verge of the *Mali nine* [referring to an upcoming inauspicious year, the memorial having been written in the eighth year of the cycle] tribulation, and approaching a year of famine, which will be still more severe for the north-western border. To make a levy of three hundred thousand troops, with provisions for three hundred days--if the ocean and Tae-shan mountain may be brought from the east, and the Keang and Hwae rivers be collected from the south, then, indeed, adequate provision may be made. If we reckon the distance of the way, a year will not be sufficient to effect the gathering. The soldiers who are first on the ground, being brought into close quarters, disturbances will break out. Some of the troops being old, and the weapons worn out, will both be unfit for use; which is the first difficulty.

"The borders being now deserted, no provisions for the army can be procured thence, and there is no mutual interdependence between the various regions and states, by which the wants of the one may be supplied from the fulness of the other; which is the second difficulty.

"If we reckon the consumption per man for three hundred days at eighteen bushels of dried rice, such a weight will require oxen for the transport; and then the food for the oxen must also be provided, which will be an additional weight of twenty bushels. The Hoo land is for the most part sandy and salt, with scarcity of water and herbage, as we know from past experience; and before the army has been out a hundred days the oxen will all die out, while the quantity of provisions still left will be more than the men can carry; which is the third difficulty.

"The Hoo country is very cold in the autumn and winter, and exposed to high winds in the spring and summer, which would necessitate a vast amount of pots and boilers, firewood and charcoal--a weight that would be utterly unmanageable. There would be a want of dried food, and water to drink, and the cares consequent on sickness and epidemics among the troops. On this account, the Hoo of past ages, with every precaution to preserve their strength, were obliged to succumb within a hundred days; which is the fourth difficulty.

"The baggage waggons that accompany the army are rarely light and springy, and cannot go with rapidity. Captives might escape very leisurely, and we should not be able to overtake them. If we had the good fortune to meet with captives, and tied them to the baggage waggons, there are dangerous and precipitous places on the road, where horses must follow each other in single line, and the prisoners would have to be detached before or behind, which would be incalculably hazardous; and that is the fifth difficulty.

"In thus extensively using up the strength of the people, there will be no opportunity for signalling their merit. Your servant would humbly express his concern about the matter. But now, since the troops have been raised, let those who first arrive be sent off. Let your servant and others proceed far into the country, come down upon them with an overwhelming onset, and thus effectually chastise the Hoo."

Wang Mang would not listen to Yen Yew's remonstrance, but continued to furnish grain to the troops as before, which gave rise to a great commotion through the empire. When Heen had received the title of Heaou Shen-yu from Wang Mang, he galloped off beyond the stockades, returned to the palace of the Shen-yu, and related the whole affair to him. The Shen-yu thereupon appointed him to the petty Hsiung-nu dignity of Marquis of Yu-suh-che-che. After that Tsoo fell sick and died, when Wang Mang appointed Tang to succeed him as Shun Shen-yu. The Distress Removing General, Chin Kin, and the Barbarian Daunting General, Wang Seun, established a military colony at Ku-seay stockade in Yun-chung. About the same time the Hsiung-nu made several raids on the border, killed the general and guards, took captive the people, and drove off great numbers of their animals. The captives who had been taken by the Chinese were questioned regarding these movements, and all affirmed that it was Keu, the son of the Heaou Shen-yu Heen, who had been the leader in the raids. The two Generals reported the same to the court.

In the spring of the year 12, Wang Mang assembled all the barbarians in the capital, and in their presence beheaded Tang, the son of Heen, publicly in the market-place. From the time of Senen-te, for several generations, the country had not been startled by beacon fires on the northern borders, the dwellings of the people were numerous, and horses and oxen were scattered over the country. But when Wang Mang excited turbulence among the Hsiung-nu, and got involved in difficulties with them, the people were reduced by death, and carried off into captivity. The troops of the twelve divisions having been long settled in their colonies without being called out, and the guards being suspended or worn out, for several years the border lands had been an abandoned desert, covered only by bleached bones....

[The merits of buying off the Hsiung-nu, as opposed to a policy of active defense or counter-attack, continued to be debated. Yen Yew's memorandum was one of the opinions brought into the discussions. This passage gives a good sense of the Chinese prejudice about the "barbarians."]

...As to the merit of invasion and defeat, referring to the transactions of the Tsin and Han dynasties, the words of Yen Yew are much to the point:--"Therefore the former kings, in measuring out the land, put the imperial territory in the centre; they divided the country into nine departments; they arranged the five outside tenures, and appointed the tribute of stock and soil; they established laws for the inner and outer nations, penal administration was fixed, and civilising influences diffused, applicable respectively to the nearer or more remote regions. Thus, according to the Ch'un-ts'ew classic, inside was the Chinese empire and outside were the barbarous nations. The barbarians are covetous and greedy of gain; their hair hangs down over their bodies, and their coats are buttoned on the left side [i.e., as opposed to the Chinese coats, buttoned on the right side]. They have human faces, but the hearts of beasts; they are distinguished from the natives of the empire both by their manners and their dress; they differ both in their customs and their food, and in language they are mutually unintelligible. They live retired among the northern hills and the secluded deserts, leading their flocks wherever pasture is to be found; hunting is the business of their life. Divided from each other by the hills and valleys, and isolated by the sandy desert, nature has placed a geographical separation between the inner and outer nations. On this account the ancient sage kings treated them like birds and beasts; they did not contract treaties, nor did they attack them. To form a treaty is simply to spend treasure and be deceived; to attack them is merely to weary out the troops and provoke raids. Their country cannot be cultivated for food; their people cannot be encouraged as subjects. Thus the outer are not to be brought inside; they must be held at a distance, avoiding familiarity. Administrative instruction will not affect these people, the New-year's

audience will not be attended by these nations. When they come, they are to be restrained and controlled; when they go, precautions and defence must be attended to. If they show a leaning towards right principles, and present tributary offerings, they should be treated with a yielding etiquette, but bridling and repressing must never be relaxed, ever conforming to circumstances. Such was the constant principle of the sage monarchs in ruling and controlling the barbarian tribes." [[Back to Contents](#)]

VII. Notes on the Western Regions.

[In addition to the detailed narrative of the relations with the Hsiung-nu, the Han chronicles contain a work entitled "Notes on the Western Regions," which provide a descriptive geography of the West as the Han knew it. Note that there is a fair amount of overlap with the account of Zhang Qian's journey to the West, to which the text here refers.]

The intercourse of China with the Western regions commenced in the time of the Emperor Wu-ti (B.C. 140-87). The thirty-six kingdoms then opened up became afterwards gradually sub-divided into more than fifty; all lying to the west of the Hsiung-nu, and south of Wu-sun. Along the north and south run great mountains, and through the centre flows a river [=the Tarim]. From east to west the land is more than 6,000 *li* in extent, and from north to south it is over 1,000 *li*. On the east it touches the confines of China at the Yuh gate [=Yumen guan, guarding the north approach to Dunhuang] and the Yang barrier [=Yang Guan, guarding the SW approach to Dunhuang].

On the west it is limited by the Tsung-ling mountains. The Southern mountains commence on the east from Kin-ching, and are connected with the southern hills of China. The river has two sources, one of which rises in the Tsung-ling mountains [=the Kashgar R.], the other in Khotan [=the Yarkand R.]. Khotan lies at the foot of the Southern mountains, and the river runs northward till it joins its confluent from the Tsung-ling, and then flows eastward into Lake Lob, which is also called the Salt Marsh. This is over 300 *li* distant from the Yuh gate and the Yang barrier, and is 300 *li* in length and breadth.

The water is stationary, neither increasing nor diminishing in summer or winter. The river is then said to run under ground, and issue again at Ts'eih-shih, where it becomes the Yellow river of China. From the Yuh gate and Yang barrier there are two roads through the Western regions. That by Shen-shen, skirting the River Po, on the north of the Southern mountains, and leading west to Sha-keu [=Yarkand] is the Southern road. After this road passes the Tsung-ling mountains, it leads to the country of the Ta Yue-she and Gan-seih. From the Royal Palace of Anterior Keu-sze [=Kao-chang], following the course of the River Po, in the direction of the Northern mountains as far as Soo-lih [=Kashgar] is the Northern road. This road passing westward across the Tsung-ling mountains, goes on to Ta-wan (i.e., Fergana), K'ang-keu (i.e., Sogdiana), and the Yen-ts'ae (Alan) country. In Yen-ke [=Karashar] and the various kingdoms of the Western regions the land is covered with cities, villages, cultivated fields, and domestic animals; and the inhabitants differ in their customs from the Hsiung-nu and people of Wu-sun. Hence they were all employed in the service of the Hsiung-nu. The Jih-ch'uh Prince, on the western border of the Hsiung-nu territory, appointed a Slaves' Protector General, whose office was to rule the Western regions, and who always dwelt in the dangerous part of Yen-ke. He had to levy the taxes on the cultivated land, and received of the wealth of these kingdoms.

From the time of the decline of the Chow dynasty, the barbarians of the North and West had dwelt intermixed on the north of the King and Wei rivers.

When Che-hwang of the Ts'in appropriated the interjacent countries, he built the Great Wall to form the boundary of China. But it only came west as far as the River T'aou [=a tributary of the Yellow River west of Lanzhou].

The Han succeeded, and in the time of the Emperor Wu-ti, the barbarians on all sides were invaded, the dignity of the empire was extended, and Chang K'ien first opened up the way into the Western regions.

After him the Light-horse General attacked and subdued the right-hand land of the Hsiung-nu (BCE 121). The Kings of Kwan-ya and Heu-choo then submitted to the Han, when the populations of their kingdoms were removed, and the building of the Wall was begun from Ling-keu westward. The region of Tsew-tseuen was first established, and afterwards gradually the people were removed in to fill it. He also divided the three territories of Woo~wei, Chang-ya, and Dunhuang into four regions, for which he made two barriers.

After the Urh-sze General had reduced Ta-wan (BCE 104), the powers in the Western regions were greatly afraid, and most of them sent envoys to China with offerings of tribute; while the Han imposed office on more of the

Western region potentates. In consequence of this, resting stations were erected at intervals, from Dunhuang westward as far as Lake Lob; and at both Lun-t'ae and K'eu-li there were several hundred agricultural troops. An envoy was appointed as Deputy Protector, to rule and defend, by sending envoys to the outside countries,

In the time of Seuen-te (BCE 73~49), the Cavalry leader Wei, was sent with a commission to protect the several kingdoms from Shenshen westward; when he subdued Koo-sze. He did not utterly exterminate it, however, but divided the nation between the two Kings of Anterior and Ulterior Keu-sze. As for the six nations on the north of the mountains, the Han at that time only undertook to protect the Southern road, and could not include all on the Northern road. Yet the Hsiung-nu were not at rest.

After this the Jih-ch'uh Prince rebelled against the Shen-yu, submitted to China with all his followers, and was received by Ching Keih, the envoy who protected the country west from Shen-shen. On his arrival in China, the Jih-ch'uh Prince was created Marquis of Kwei-tih, and Ching Keih was made Marquis of Gan-yuen. This took place in the year BCE 59.

Ching Keih was then appointed to defend the Northern road, and hence he was entitled Governor General, a title that originated with the appointment of Ching Keih. From this time the office of Slaves' Protector General was abolished. The Hsiung-nu became still more weakened, and were unable to approach the Western regions. The military colonies were therefore removed and planted in the countries of Pih-seih, Keen-pe, and Sha-keu. The Deputy Protectors of the military colonies were first attached to the Governor General. The Governor General took the oversight of the affairs of Wu-sun, Sogdiana, and the various foreign countries. When any sign of disaffection was manifest, he reported the same to headquarters. If it was practicable, the matter was amicably adjusted; if it was a case for coercion, then he attacked them. The Governor General had his residence in the city of Woo-luy [west of modern Karashar] distant from the Yang barrier 2,738 *li*, and in proximity to the officer of the agricultural colony of K'eu-li. The land is rich and productive, being medium-class land of the Western regions. Hence the Governor General had his seat there.

In the time of the Emperor Yuen-te [BCE 48-33], the *Woo-ke* Deputy Protector was also appointed, and a military colony established at the Royal Palace of Anterior Keu-sze. About this time, Tsze-liih-che, the Hsiung-nu King of Eastern Poo-luy, submitted to the Governor General with more than 1,700 followers. The latter divided the western part of the kingdom of Ulterior Keu-sze into Woo-tan and Tsze-li, in which he placed this new accession. After the reigns of Seuen-te and Yuen-te, the Shen-yu was styled a border vassal, and the Western regions gave in their submission. The extent of the land, the hills and the rivers, the kings and marquises, the number of the people, and the distances by the roads were all carefully examined and noted.

[At this point the account produces the results of that systematic description, where the route moves south around the Taklamakan, then to the far west, and back around the Taklamakan on the north. Note that when the text refers to the Governor-General, it means the Chinese military commandant in the west; hence many of the states described here are specified as not being under his jurisdiction.]

Outside the Yang barrier the inhabitants of the adjacent country were first called Cho Keang. The King of Cho Keang was called Keu-hoo-lae, and lived at a distance from the Yang barrier of 1,800 *li*, and from Ch'ang-an 6,300 *li*, in a secluded part on the southwest, away from the high road. The kingdom consisted of 450 families, comprising 1750 individuals and 5000 well-trained soldiers. On the west it was bounded by Tsey-muh. The people removed their flocks for the convenience of water and pastures. They did not cultivate their fields, and depended upon Shen-shen, Tsey-muh, and Ko-shan for iron, with which they made military implements. Their soldiers were armed with bows and lances, and wore knives, swords, and helmets. Proceeding north-west from thence to Shen-shen, the high road is reached. [[Back to Contents](#)]

Shen-shen

The original name of the kingdom of Shen-shen was Lou-lan. The capital is the city of Woo-ne, which is distant from the Yang barrier 1,600 *li*, and from Ch'ang-an 6,100 *li*. The kingdom contains 1,570 families, comprising a population of 14,100, with 2,912 trained troops, a Guardian Marquis, a Marquis of Keih-hoo, a Protector General of Shen-shen, a Protector General for repelling the Keu-sze, a Right Tsey-keu, a Left Tsey-keu, a Prince for repelling the Keu-sze, and two Interpreters-in-chief. The seat of government of the Chinese Governor General lies to the north-west 1,785 *li*. The kingdom of Shan is distant 1,365 *li*; and Keu-sze lies to the north-west 1,890 *li*. The land is sandy and salt, and there are few cultivated fields. The country relies on the neighbouring kingdoms for cereals and agricultural products. The country produces jade, abundance of rushes, the tamarix, the *eloecocca*

verniciifera, and white grass. The people remove with their flocks and herds for pasturage where they can find sufficiency of water and herbage. They have asses, horses, and many camels. They can fabricate military weapons the same as the people of Cho Keang.

At first the Emperor Wu-ti, under the influence of Chang K'ien's representations, was very desirous to cultivate an intercourse with Ta-wan and the interjacent countries, and the envoys of the respective nations followed each other continuously, more than ten in number in the course of a year. Lou-lan, in concert with Koo-sze, however, being on the high road, harassed these officials, attacked and robbed the Chinese envoy Wang K'wei and his party, and on various occasions acted as eyes and ears to the Hsiung-nu, causing their troops to intercept the Chinese envoys. The latter were profuse in their statements that the kingdom contained cities and towns, and that the military were weak and might easily be vanquished. Wu-ti thereupon sent Chaou Po-noo, the Marquis of Tsung-peaou, to take command of the cavalry of the dependent states with the local troops, numbering several tens of thousands, and make an attack on Koo-sze. Wang K'wei, who had several times suffered at the hands of Lou-lan, received the Imperial order to assist Chaou Po-noo in the command of the army. The latter advancing at the head of 700 light-horse, seized the King of Lou-lan; then subjugated Koo-sze, and, relying on the prestige of his fierce troops, he overawed the states dependent on Wu-sun and Ta-wan. Chaou Po-noo was further promoted Marquis of Tsuh-ya, and Wang K'wei was made Marquis of Haou. About this time the Chinese erected fortresses and entrenchments at intervals between that country and the Yuh gate. Lou-lan having submitted, presented offerings of tribute to China, which the Hsiung-nu hearing of, sent troops to attack them. On this the King of Lou-lan sent one son as a hostage to the Hsiung-nu, and another to China.

Afterwards, when the Urh-sze General went to attack Ta-wan, the Hsiung-nu wished to intercept him. The General's troops, however, presented such a formidable appearance, that they did not dare to take the initiative, but sent cavalry to wait in Lou-lan till the Chinese envoy should again pass, wishing completely to cut off his return. The Chinese Military Chief, Jin Wan, had then command of the military colony at the Yuh gate barrier; and when the Urh-sze General was afterwards obstructed, Jin Wan ascertained the facts from some captives and reported the same to the capital. The Emperor issued a rescript ordering Jin Wan to lead troops by a convenient road, and capture the King of Lou-lan. The General proceeded to the city gate, where he reproached the King for his conduct, but the latter replied: "When a small State lies between two great kingdoms, if it has not all alliance with both, it cannot be at rest. I wish now to place my nation within the bounds of the Chinese empire." The Emperor confiding in his words re-established him in his kingdom, and commissioned him to keep a watch over the movements of the Hsiung-nu. From this time the Hsiung-nu had, no great intimacy with, or confidence in, Lou-lan.

In BCE 92 the King of Lou-lan died, when the people of the country came to request the son, who was residing as a hostage in China, to succeed to the throne; but the hostage Prince had always been treated as a criminal while in China, and as a punishment was confined in the Silkworm-house Palace. Hence, instead of sending him home, the Chinese informed the applicants that the Emperor was so tenderly attached to his attendant prince, that he could not part with him, and requested them to install the next son in the dignity. When the King of Lou-lan was appointed, the Chinese again reproached the hostage prince with the fact that his father had also sent a son as hostage to the Hsiung-nu. On the death of the next king, the Hsiung-nu first hearing of it, sent their hostage prince back, who succeeded to the throne. China then sent an envoy with a rescript to the new king, ordering him to pay a visit to Court, when the Emperor would bestow upon him most liberal gifts. The wife of the former king by a second marriage, who was consequently the step-mother of the present king, said to him: "Your royal predecessors sent two sons to China as hostages, neither of which returned. Is it indeed reasonable that you should now go to Court?" The King, taking her counsel, discharged the envoy with the remark: "Having newly acceded to the throne, the affairs of the kingdom are not yet adjusted. I wish to wait a year or two, after which I will have an audience with the Emperor." Now the extreme eastern border of the kingdom of Lou-lan where it approached nearest to China, was opposite the Pih-lung mound, where there was a scarcity of water and pasture; and it always fell to its share to provide guides, to carry water and forward provisions to meet the Chinese envoys; but being frequently exposed to the oppressive raids of the soldiery, they at last resolved that it was inconvenient to hold intercourse with China. Afterwards, again on the revolt of the Hsiung-nu, they several times intercepted and killed the Chinese envoys. The King's younger brother, Hwuy-too-ke, who had submitted to the Han, communicated all these facts to the Chinese.

In BCE 77 the Generalissimo, Ho Kwang-pih, sent Foo Keae-tsze, the Superintendent of Ping-lo, to stab the King. Foo Keae-tsze hastily selected some bold and daring followers, and having received gold and silks, circulated the report that the object of his mission was to make presents to a foreign state. Having reached Lou-lan, he deceived the King with the pretence that he had presents for him. The latter, delighted with the event, unsuspectingly invited

Foo Keae-tsze to drink wine. When the King was intoxicated, Foo removed the royal screen and told two of his sturdy followers to stab him from behind. The nobles who were sitting round all fled. Foo Keae-tsze then made an announcement, saying: "The deed just accomplished is a retribution for the King's crimes against the Han. The Emperor sent me to put him to death. You must set up the King's younger brother, Hwuy-too-ke, now in China, as King." The Chinese troops, who had just arrived, not daring to move, he gave orders that the kingdom of Lou-lan should cease to be. Foo Keae-tsze then decapitated the King, and having committed the head to the wardens, it was suspended at the north gate, and Foo Keae-tsze was promoted Marquis of E-yang. Hwuy-too-ke was then set up as King, and the kingdom re-established under the name of Shen-shen, for which a seal of investiture was engraved. One of the ladies of the royal palace was bestowed on him for a consort. Carriages, cavalry, a baggage train, ministers of state, generals, troops, and officers of every grade escorted him outside the east gate, and sent him away as the first of a new line. The King himself presented the following request to the Emperor: "I have resided long in China, and now that I am returning weak and single-handed, while there is still a son of the former King living, I fear I shall be assassinated. In our kingdom there is the city of E-tun, where the land is rich and productive; may I request the Han to send a general to plant a military colony there, and collect the grain, so that your servant may rely upon his prestige?" The Han monarch thereupon sent a cavalry leader with forty subordinates to cultivate the fields at E-tun, in order to guard the place and soothe the people. After this a Protector General was appointed and this was the beginning of placing officers in E-tun.

Following the high road from China, through Shen-shen, west-ward to Tsey-muh is 700 *li*. Beyond Tsey-muh the five cereals are everywhere cultivated. The land, herbage, trees, the animals they rear, and the military implements they make are all much the same as in China, with some differences. A record of these matters is given below....

[\[Back to Contents\]](#)

Y'u-teen (Khotan)

The capital of the kingdom of Khotan is West City, distant from Ch'ang-an 9,670 *li*. The kingdom contains 3,300 families, comprising a population of 19,300 persons, with 2,400 trained troops, a Guardian Marquis, a Right and a Left General, a Right and a Left Knight, an East City Chief, a West City Chief, and an Interpreter-in-chief. The seat of the Governor General lies to the north-east, distant 3,947 *li*. The country joins Cho Keang on the south, and Koo-mih on the north. The waters on the west of Khotan all flow westward into the Western (Caspian?) Sea. The waters on the east all flow eastward into the Sait Marsh (Lake Lob), from which springs the source of the Yellow river. The country produces abundance of Jade and other stones. Pe-shan lies 380 *li* to the west.... [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

Ke-pin (Kophen [=Kabulistan])

The capital of the kingdom of Kophen is the city of Sun-seen, distant from Ch'ang-an 12,200 *li*. The kingdom is not under the control of the Governor General. The numbers of families, persons, and trained troops are very large, as it is a great kingdom. The seat of the Governor General lies north-west at a distance of 6,840 *li*. The kingdom of Woo-ch'a lies 2,250 *li* to the east. The kingdom of Nantow is nine days' journey to the north-east. The country joins the Ta Yue-she on the north-west and Woo-yih-shan-li on the south-west. Formerly, when the Hsiung-nu subjugated the Ta Yue-she, the latter migrated to the west, and gained the dominion over the Ta-hea (Dahae); whereupon the king of the Sae (Sacae) moved south and ruled over Kophen. The Sae were scattered, and at times formed several kingdoms. North-west of Soo-lih the Heu-seun, Keuen-tuh, and consanguineous nations are all descendants of the ancient Sac. The land of Kophen is flat; and the climate mild and agreeable. The country produces *medicago sativa*, various herbs, strange trees, sandal wood, *sophora japonica*, *rottlera japonica*, bamboo, and the varnish tree. They cultivate the five grains, grapes and other fruits. They manure their gardens and fields. In the low and damp ground they grow rice. In winter they eat raw vegetables. The people are ingenious in carving, ornamenting, engraving and inlaying; in building palaces and mansions; weaving nets, ornamental perforation and embroidery; and excel at cooking. They have gold, silver, copper and tin, of which they make vessels, and expose them for sale. They have a gold and a silver currency. On the obverse of their money is a man on horseback, and on the reverse a man's face. The country produces the Indian ox, the buffalo, the elephant, great dogs, large apes, and the pea-fowl; also pearls of different kinds, coral, amber, rock crystal, vitreous ware, camels, and domestic animals the same as other nations.

From the time that the Emperor Wu-ti opened up communication with Ke-pin, the rulers of that kingdom, in view of the extreme distance, had considered themselves safe from the intrusion of a Chinese army. In this confidence the King W'oo-t'ow-laou on several occasions put the Chinese envoys to death. On the death of Woo-t'ow-laou, his

son, who succeeded to the dignity, sent an envoy with offerings to China; when Wan Chung, the Protector General at the barrier, was sent to escort him home. The King again wished to take Wan Chung's life; but the latter becoming aware of his intention, entered in to a plot with the King of Yung-keu's son, Yin-muh-foo, which resulted in an attack on the country, when the King was killed, and Yin-muh-foo installed as King of Ke-pin, and received the seal and ribbon of investiture from China.

Afterwards the Military Marquis Chaou Tih, who was sent to Ke-pin, managed to get on bad terms with Yin-muh-foo, when the latter put the felon's collar on the envoy, killed his assistant and attendants, more than seventy persons in all, and then sent an envoy with a letter to the Emperor, acknowledging his transgression. But the country being among the unregistered and impracticable regions, the Emperor Yuen-te discharged the envoy; communication being cut off by the Hindu Kush.

In the time of the Emperor Ching-te (BCE 32-7) Ke-pin again sent an envoy with offerings and an acknowledgment of guilt. The supreme board wished to send an envoy with a reply, to escort the Ke-pin envoy home; but Too Kin addressed the Generalessimo Wang Fung to the following effect:--"Formerly Yin-muh-foo, the King of Ke-pin, who was instated by China, ended by perversely rejecting our authority. Now there is no greater manifestation of virtue than for a ruler of a kingdom to treat the people as his children; and there is no greater sin than to detain and murder an envoy. Hence although omitting to requite favours they have no fear of chastisement; for they know that they are at such an extreme distance that our troops cannot reach them. When they have anything to ask, they come with humble expressions; but when they do not want anything, they are proud and insulting. They cannot by any means be brought to cherish the feeling of submission. Whenever China enters into liberal correspondence with the barbarian tribes, and we are pleased to attend to their requests, we receive their approaches with intimacy, and they act as brigands. Now the dangerous passes of the Hindu Kush cannot be traversed by the people of Ke-pin. A cringing attitude is no evidence of the pacification of the Western regions; and although they are not annexed to the empire, yet they are not a source of danger to the cities and suburbs. Formerly those we held intimate relationship with repudiated the token of authority, and spread vice and anarchy through the Western regions; so that intercourse was found to be impracticable. Now they come professing penitence, and do not enter into an intimate relationship. Their dignitaries who present offerings are all mean men carrying on commerce. They wish to open up commercial relations for the sake of the trade; and the offerings are a mere pretence. Therefore if we take the trouble to send an envoy to escort them to the Hindu Kush, I fear we shall commit an error, and find ourselves deceived. Whenever an envoy is sent to escort a guest, precautions must be taken to protect him against the attacks of brigands.

"From Pe-shan southward there are four or five kingdoms not attached to China. With only a hundred men to keep a lookout, and to beat the five night watches for self-protection, they will be at times exposed to attacks from robbers, carrying off their asses and cattle bearing provisions and will thus be rendered dependent on these countries for food, for which they must make some requital. The countries may be small and poor, and unable to furnish food; or the inhabitants may be cruel and crafty and refuse to give, even intercepting them at the boundary. The Chinese Commission will in such circumstances be left to starve among the hills and valleys, begging food to sustain life, with no means of obtaining it. In some ten or twenty days men and animals will die in the desert, and be never more heard of. Again, on passing the Great Headache Mountain, the Little Headache Mountain, the Red Land, and the Fever Slope, men's bodies become feverish, they lose colour, and are attacked with headache and vomiting; the asses and cattle being all in like condition. Moreover there are three pools with rocky banks along which the pathway is only 16 or 17 inches wide for a length of some 30 *li*, over an abyss of frightful depth where the travelers whether on horse or afoot are all attached, and lead each other by ropes. After more than 2,000 *li* the Hindu Kush is reached; more than half the cattle having perished by falling down the chasms, their bodies lying scattered about and dashed to pieces. Men lose their grasp, and they are unable to save each other. In fact, viewing the dangers of these precipitous gorges, the difficulties are beyond description. The sage kings divided the empire into nine departments and instituted regulations for the five tenures. Applying themselves to secure prosperity in the interior, they sought nothing from abroad. Now in sending an envoy to carry out the supreme commission by escorting the barbarian traders, you weary out the host of officials in passing through a dangerous and difficult road; thus suspending and degrading the trustworthy in the performance of a useless service. This is not a far-sighted policy. The envoy having already received his credentials, let him proceed as far as Pe-shan and then return." To this Wang Fung replied:--"According to your words, it is certainly profitable to Ke-pin if we grant them a market for their commerce; while they only send an envoy once in several years." [[Back to Contents](#)]

Woo-yih-shan-li [Khorasan]

The capital of the kingdom of Woo-yi-shan-li is distant from Ch'ang-an 12,200 *li*. The State is not under the control of the Governor General. The numbers of families, of the population, and of trained troops are all those of a great kingdom. The seat of the Governor General lies north-east at a distance of sixty days' journey. The country joins Ke-pin on the east, Po-taou (Bactria) on the north, and Li-keen [=Seleucid state]: and Teaou-che [=ancient Persia?] on the west. After a journey of about a hundred days, the kingdom of Teaou-che is reached, bordering on the Western Sea [=Mediterranean]. The climate there is hot and damp, and rice is cultivated. There are large birds, with eggs in size like a pitcher. The people are very numerous and are often under petty chieftains, subject to the Parthians, who consider foreigners clever at jugglery. There is a tradition among the Parthian elders about the Dead water [Dead Sea?], and the Mother of the Western kings in Teaou-che, but they have never been seen. They say that from Teaou-che, a sea voyage of about a hundred days westward brings one near the place where the sun sets. The burning heat of the country of Woo-yih is exceptionally fierce. They have herbs and trees, domestic animals, the five kinds of grain, fruits, vegetables, food and drink, palaces and dwelling-houses, bazaars, circulating medium, military weapons, gold, pearls, and such like, all the same as in Ke-pin. They have also excellent peaches. The lion and the buffalo are found there, and by custom it is deemed laudable to kill these without mercy. On the obverse of their money there is only a man's head, and on the reverse is a figure of a man on horseback. They ornament their staves with gold and silver. Being extremely distant from China, an envoy rarely arrives. From the Yuh Gate and the Yang barrier, the southern road passing Shen-shen, tends southerly to Woo-yih-shan-li, which is the terminus of the southern road. Thence proceeding north, Parthia lies on the east. [[Back to Contents](#)]

Gan-seih (Parthia)

The capital of the kingdom of Gan-seih is the city of Fan-tow, distant from Ch'ang-an 11,600 *li*. It is not under the control of the Governor General. The country joins K'ang-keu [Soghdiana] on the north, Woo-yih-shan-li [Khorasan] on the east, and Teaou-che [Persia] on the west. The soil, climate, productions, and customs of the people are the same as those of Woo-yih and Ke-pin. They also have a silver coinage, with the king's head on the obverse, and a woman's head on the reverse. When the king dies, they immediately cast new coins. The country produces ostriches. They have several hundred cities great and small. It is a kingdom of the largest size, being several thousand *li* square. As the country extends to the Wei (Oxus) river their traders traverse the adjoining kingdoms both by land and water. They write on skins in horizontal lines, in which manner they keep their records.

When the Emperor Wu-ti first sent an envoy to Gan-seih, the King commanded a general to take 20,000 cavalry to meet him at the eastern border. The eastern border is several thousand *li* distant from the metropolis. Proceeding northward, they passed several tens of cities on the way, all the people of which were allied to each other. On this occasion the King sent an envoy to follow the Han envoy home to China. He took with him ostrich eggs and Li-keen jugglers, which he presented as offerings, and with which the Emperor was greatly delighted. To the east of Gan-seih is the country of the Ta Yue-she

[[Back to Contents](#)]

Ta Yue-she (Massagetae)

The capital of the kingdom of the Ta Yue-she is the city of Keen-she, distant from Ch'ang-an 11,600 *li*. It is not under the control of the Governor General. The kingdom contains 100,000 families, comprising a population of 400,000, with 100,000 trained troops. The seat of the Governor General lies to the east, at a distance of 4,740 *li*. To Parthia on the west is a distance of forty-nine days' journey. The country joins Ke-pin on the south. The soil, the climate, the productions, the customs of the people, and the currency, are all the same as those of Gan-seih. They have the single-humped camel (dromedary). The Ta Yue-she are a wandering nation, moving from place to place for the convenience of their flocks and herds, the same as the Hsiung-nu. They have more than a hundred thousand men skilled in the use of the bow; and in former times considered themselves strong enough to treat the Hsiung-nu with contempt. Originally they lived between Dunhuang and Ke-lien, when Maou-tun Shen-yu [209-174 BCE] attacked and subdued them. Laou-shang Shen-yu [173-160 BCE] killed the King of the Yue-she, and converted his skull into a drinking-bowl. The tribe then removed to a distance, passed Ta-wan, and attacked the Ta-hea on the west, reduced them to vassalage, and established their metropolis on the north of the Wei (Oxus) river, where the King held his Court. A small section, who were unable to leave, fortified themselves at the southern mountains, and were named by the Keang the Seaou Yue-she. The Ta-hea were originally without a Chief Paramount; and were accustomed to set up petty chiefs over their cities. But the people were weak and afraid to engage in war. Hence when the Yue-she removed into their country they all became their vassals, and they presented a united petition to the Chinese envoy. They have five Heih-hows..., all dependents of the Ta Yue-she. [[Back to Contents](#)]

K'ang-keu (Soghdiana)

The King of K'ang-keu likes to hold his Court during winter in the country of Yue-nieh at the city of Pe-teen, which is distant from Ch'ang-an 12,300 *li*. The kingdom is not under the control of the Governor General. From the country of Yue-nieh to the king's summer residence inside the border is a distance of seven days' journey on horseback. Thence to Ch'ang-an is 9,104 *li*. The kingdom contains 120,000 families, comprising a population of 600,000, with 120,000 trained troops. The seat of the Governor General lies to the east 5,550 *li*. Their customs are the same as those of the Ta Yue-she. On the east they paid a forced servitude to the Hsiung-nu.

In the time of the Emperor Seuen-te [BCE 73-49], when the Hsiung-nu were in a state of anarchy, and five Shen-yu were all fighting against each other, China interposed its influence to set up Hoo-han-seay Shen-yu; and Che-che Shen-yu being incensed against the Chinese, put their envoy to death; and then moving westward [BCE 49] settled in K'ang-keu.

After this the Governor General Kan Yen-show and the Assistant Deputy Protector Ch'in Tang brought the Woo-ke Deputy Protector with the troops of the various kingdoms of the Western regions to K'ang-keu and exterminated the power of Che-che Shen-yu; the details regarding which may be found in the Memoirs of Kan Yen-show, and Ch'in Tang. This took place in the year BCE 36.

In the time of the Emperor Ch'ing-te [BCE 32-7], the Prince of K'ang-keu sent his son to China as a hostage, with an offering of tribute; but the country being at such an extreme distance, the Prince was only haughty and insolent, and refused to look up to China like the other nations. The Governor General Kwo Shun several times addressed the throne, saying:--"Originally when the Hsiung-nu attained their highest prosperity it was not on account of their connection with Wu-sun and K'ang-keu; and when they came calling themselves menials, it was not because they had lost these two kingdoms. Although China has received hostage princes from all these, yet the three kingdoms impose burdens on each other, and neglect intercourse with the empire as of old. They also keep watch, waiting a convenient time for demonstration. When near they cannot be taken into close confidence; when distant they cannot be made use of as vassals. Applying this to present circumstances, the connection with Wu-sun by marriage has never turned out of any advantage to us; but on the contrary has been a cause of trouble to China. However, Wu-sun having formerly formed this connection, and now both that nation and the Hsiung-nu style themselves vassals, it is not right that they should be repelled. But K'ang-keu is so proud and crafty that they will not pay due honour to our envoys. When the Governor General's official reached their country he was set below the envoys from Wu-sun and the other countries. When the King and his nobles have finished their repast, the Governor General's official is then allowed to swallow a morsel. Hence there is no room for boasting to the neighbouring kingdoms of these forming provinces of the empire. According to this estimate; why do they send their sons to Court as hostages? The reason is that they wish to deceive us by specious words in order to be allowed to trade. The Hsiung-nu and all the great barbarian kingdoms now render perfect service to China; but it is reported that K'ang-keu does not pay homage; and moreover that it has sent an envoy to the Shen-yu, as an act of self-humiliation. Their hostage prince ought to be sent back, and an envoy should never be sent to them again, in order to show that the house of Han does not hold intercourse with kingdoms which ignore the rules of etiquette. The small regions of Dunhuang and Tsew-tseuen and the eight kingdoms on the southern road give food to the envoys passing to and fro, including men, horses, asses and camels; all which becomes very severe on them, exhausting their supplies of rice; but to meet and escort those of proud, crafty, and extremely distant nations, is by no means a wise policy. In opening up a fresh intercourse, China treats men from afar with the greatest liberality; but in the end has to curb and restrain them, yet she does not cast them off."

To the north-west of K'ang-keu, about 2,000 *li* distant, is the kingdom of Yen-tse [the As], with more than 100,000 bowmen; having the same customs as K'ang-keu, on the border of a great marsh without banks, which is the Northern Sea [Caspian]. K'ang-keu has five viceroys. [[Back to Contents](#)]

Ta-yuan [Ta-wan] (Ferghana)

The capital of the kingdom of Ta-wan is the city of Kwe-shan, distant from Ch'ang-an 12,550 *li*. The kingdom contains 60,000 families, comprising a population of 300,000, with 60,000 trained troops, a Viceroy, and a National Assistant Prince. The seat of the Governor General lies to the east at a distance of 4,031 *li*. To the city of Pe-teen in K'ang-keu on the north is 1,510 *li*. To the Ta Yue-she on the south-west is 690 *li*. The country joins K'ang-keu on the north, and the Ta Yue-she on the south. The soil, climate, productions, and customs of the people are the same as those of the Ta Yue-she and Gan-seih. Round about Ta-wan they make wine from grapes. Wealthy people store up as much as 10,000 stone and over in their cellars, and keep it for several tens of years without

spoiling. The people are fond of wine, and the horses are fond of *medicago sativa*. There are more than seventy other cities in the country. There is a numerous breed of excellent horses which perspire blood. It is said that this breed is from the strain of a supernatural stallion. When Chang K'ien first told the Emperor about them, the monarch sent an envoy with a thousand pieces of gold and a golden horse, in order to obtain some of these excellent horses. But the King of Ta-wan, considering that on account of its extreme distance China could not send an army there, and in view of the great value he attached to these precious horses, refused to part with them to China. The envoy having been betrayed into the use of some unguarded expressions regarding Ta-wan, the King had him put to death, and took possession of his treasure. The Emperor thereupon sent the Urh-sze General Li Kwang-li in command of an army numbering over 100,000 from first to last, which attacked Ta-wan for four successive years, till at last the natives beheaded the King Wuh-kwa, and presented an offering of 3,000 horses. The Chinese army then returned. The details of these transactions are found in the "Memoir of Chang K'ien." The Urh-sze general having secured the decapitation of the King, set up a noble of the country, who had previously received benefits from China--by name Mei-tsae--in his place.

More than a year after this the nobles of Ta-wan charged Mei-tsae with having, by his sycophancy, caused the butchery of their compatriots, and uniting together, they put Mei-tsae to death, and set up Chen-fung, the younger brother of Wuh-kwa, as king, who sent his son to Court as a hostage. China consequently sent an envoy with gifts, to secure and pacify them. More than ten missions were subsequently sent to the various kingdoms west of Ta-wan, seeking for rarities; and the fame of the power of China, which had subdued Ta-wan, was thus spread far and near. Chen-fung, the King of Ta-wan, entered into a treaty with China, by which he agreed to send an offering of two celestial horses every year. The Chinese envoy selected and took back with him plants of the grape and *medicago sativa*. The Emperor now having a numerous stud of celestial horses, and the ambassadors flocking in numbers from foreign countries, having also planted the grape and the *medicago sativa*, he left his palace and took up his residence in a separate house, to have a distant look-out upon his possessions. From Fergana westward to the kingdom of Parthia, although their language is somewhat different, yet the resemblance is so great that they can make themselves intelligible to each other. The people of Ta-wan have deep sunken eyes, and bushy beards and whiskers. They are clever traders, and dispute about the division of a farthing. Women are honourably treated among them, and their husbands are guided by them in their decisions. Silk and varnish are used all over the country. They did not understand casting iron implements till a Chinese envoy, having lost his troops, submitted to them, and taught them the art of casting, when they made new military weapons. They applied the Chinese gold and silver to make vessels, instead of using them for state presents. From Wu-sun westward to Gan-seih, the several kingdoms are all near the country of the Hsiung-nu. The Hsiung-nu having oppressed the Yue-she, when the Hsiung-nu envoy came to Ta-wan with a letter from the Shen-yu, he was entertained and forwarded, as they dared not detain and punish him. But when the Chinese envoy arrived, he could not obtain food, nor purchase cattle, nor secure the accommodation necessary for his horses till he had delivered his presents. The reason of this was that China was so far distant, and possessed so much wealth, that the people of Ta-wan would only give them what they wanted on fair commercial considerations. After Hoo-han-seay Shen-yu paid court to China, then China was honoured by all the kingdoms....

[\[Back to Contents\]](#)

Wu-sun.

The Sovereign of Wu-sun, who is styled the Great Kwan-me, has his seat of government in the city of Ch'ih-kuh, distant from Ch'ang-an 8,900 li [*Wylie indicates their location as Kulja and much of Ili, east of lake Issykul*]. The kingdom contains 120,000 families, comprising a population of 630,000 persons. They have an army of 188,800, a Minister of Emoluments, a Left Generalessimo, a kight Generalissimo, three Marquises, a Commander-in-chief, a Protector General, two Inspectors General, a grand official, two household officials, and a Knight. The seat of the Governor General lies 1721 li to the east. The country of Fan-nuy in Kang-keu (Sogdiana) lies 5,000 li to the west. On the jungly plains there is much rain and cold. On the hills pine and fir trees abound. The inhabitants do not cultivate the soil, but they plant trees. They roam about with their flocks and herds in search of water and pasture, their national customs being the same as those of the Hsiung-nu. Horses are very numerous, some wealthy people having as many as four or five thousand. The people are pig-headed, covetous as wolves, and utterly unreliable. They are much given to plundering raids, and are characteristically violent as a nation.

Formerly they were subject to the Hsiung-nu, but subsequently, on attaining great prosperity, they cast off their alligiance. The country joins that of the Hsiung-nu on the east, Kang-keu on the north-west, Ta-wan (Fergana) on the west, and several settled kingdoms possessing cities and villages on the south. The inhabitants were originally

Sae (Sacae); but the Ta Yue-she (Massagetae) on the west subdued and expelled the King of the Sae; when the latter moving south, crossed the Hindu Kush; and the Ta Yue-she occupied the country.

At a subsequent period the Kwan-mo of Wu-sun attacked and subdued the Ta Yue-she, who then went westward, and reduced the Ta-hea (Dahae) to a state of vassalage, while the Kwan-mo of Wu-sun took possession of their country. In consequence of these revolutions, the population was of a mixed character, containing, besides those of Wu-sun, Sae and Ta Yue-she elements also.

[The account proceeds to quote Chang K'ien's observations about the Wu-sun and describe the Chinese policies which followed his mission. Among the interesting aspects of this account are the touching tales of the fate of the imperial princesses who were pawns in the political intrigues.]

The Hsiung-nu, hearing of their intercourse with China, were bent on attacking them. Furthermore, when the Han sent an envoy to Wu-sun, the envoy passed southward to Ta-wan and the Yue-she, forming a perpetual alliance with these nations. In view of these various events, the authorities of Wu-sun took the alarm, and on the strength of Chang K'ien's proposals, despatched an envoy with an offering of horses, wishing to obtain an Imperial Princess in marriage, and thus effect a fraternal bond. The Emperor laid the matter before his Ministers, who after consultation assented to the request, and replied:--"It is necessary first to transmit the marriage gifts, after which the lady will be forwarded." Wu-sun thereupon sent a thousand horses as a marriage gift to the Han monarch.

In the Yuen-fung period [BCE 110-105], Se-keun, the daughter of Keen, the King of Keang-too, was sent as the Imperial Princess destined to be the bride. Carriages and an imperial outfit were conferred upon the lady, with a retinue of officers, subordinate officials, servants and attendants, several hundreds in all, and a most costly array of presents. The Kwan-mo made her lady of the right. The Hsiung-nu also sent a maiden to the Kwan-mo for a bride, and he made her lady of the Left.

On reaching her destined home, the Princess had a palace built for her. Once or twice during the year, she and the Kwan-mo gave a feast, on which occasions she presented silks to the kings and accompanying nobles. The Kwan-mo being old, however, and his speech unintelligible, the Princess becoming dejected and melancholy composed the following ballad respecting herself

"My parents they have wed me,
All helpless and undone,
In a distant alien kingdom,
To the Monarch of Wu-sun.

"My dwelling's vast and dreary,
Deck'd with felt in place of silk;
My daily food is flesh meat,
Accompanied with milk.

"My mind with thoughts is burden'd,
My heart with grief oppress'd;
Would that I were a yellow stork,
I'd fly back to my nest."

On hearing of the lady's sad condition the Emperor was touched with compassion; and every second year sent an envoy, bearing presents of embroidered hangings and decorations.

In view of his great age, the Kwan-mo wished to give the young Princess in marriage to his grandson the Tsin-tsow. She would not listen to the proposal, however, but forwarded a letter to the Emperor stating her case. The latter desiring so far to conciliate Wu-sun that he might be able by its assistance to crush the Hsiung-nu, recommended the Princess to comply with the customs of the country. The marriage with the Tsin-tsow was accordingly consummated. On the death of the Kwan-mo, the Tsin-tsow succeeded to the throne. Tsin-tsow was an official title. His name was Keun-seu-me....

After the marriage of the Princess of Keang-too with the Tsin-tsow, she gave birth to a daughter named Shaou-foo. On the death of the Princess subsequently, the Emperor again sent Keae-yew, the grand-daughter of Woo, the King of Tsou, as an Imperial Princess, to be the Tsin-tsow's bride. The death of the Tsin-tsow took place while Ne-me,

his son by his Hsiung-nu consort, was still a child; and Ung-kwei-me, the son of the Tsin-tsow's uncle, the Ta-luh, was put on the throne, with the understanding that when Ne-me was of age the dignity should revert to him...

Ung-kwei-me ... took to wife the widowed Tsoo princess; by whom he had three sons and two daughters. the eldest son was named Yuen-kwei-me; the second, Wan-ne'en, became King of Sha-keu (Yarkand)... The eldest daughter Te-she was married to Keang-pin the King of Kwei-tsze, while her sister was married to the Heih-how of Jo-hoo....

In the year BCE 64, the Kwan-me of Wu-sun forwarded a letter to the throne through Chang Hwuy to the following effect:--"Desiring that the imperial grandson Yuen-kwei-me should continue the succession, it is my wish that by an alliance with an Imperial Princess, the bond of relationship should be strengthened afresh, and thus our connection with the Hsiung-nu be completely cut off. I wish to send a thousand horses and the same number of mules as a marriage present." This letter was handed over by the Emperor to the dukes and high ministers for deliberation. The Grand Director of Ceremonies, Seaou Wang-che, remarked that Wu-sun was in a region so extremely remote, that in case of rebellion it would be difficult to preserve it. He thought it inexpedient on this occasion to offer one of the Imperial ladies. The objection, however, was overruled by the Emperor, who extolled Wu-sun for the great military prestige it had established in the recent campaign. He also laid much stress on conforming to precedent.

An envoy was accordingly despatched to Wu-sun to receive the betrothal presents. The Kwan-me, the heir apparent, the Right and Left Generals, and the Protector General all sent envoys to China, a retinue of more than 300 persons, to receive the young lady. The Emperor selected Seang-foo, the daughter of the Wu-sun Princess Keae-yew's younger brother, to be the Imperial Princess; and appointed officials, attendants, and coachmen, more than a hundred persons, who were all placed in the Academic Institute to learn the Wu-sun language. The festive gathering preparatory to departure was graced by the Imperial presence. The Hsiung-nu envoy and the princes of foreign states were present; while the chief actor superintended the valedictory music. The banqueting-house magnate Chang Hwuy, Marquis of Chang-lo, was sent as convoy. Four commissioners holding tokens of credence were appointed to accompany the young lady as far as Dunhuang. Before they had crossed the boundary, the news reached them that Ung-kwei-me, the Kwan-me of Wu-sun, was dead [BCE 60], and that the Wu-sun nobles, according to the original agreement, had unanimously appointed the Tsin-tsow's grandson Ne-me to be the new Kwan-me, with the style of the Mad King. On receipt of this news Chang Hwuy forwarded a despatch to Court, expressing a desire to leave the young lady at Dunhuang for a time, while he rode forward to Wu-sun, to reproach them for not setting Yuen-kwei-me on the vacant throne; after which he would return to meet the young lady. The matter was referred to the council of dukes and high ministers. Seaou Wang-che again expressed his views, that Wu-sun was acting a double part, and that it was difficult to maintain a treaty with them. "It is now," he observed, "more than forty years since the first Imperial Princess went to Wu-sun; but the favours and blessings conferred have not been effectual in cementing the confidence of close relationship; nor have we secured peace on the border lands. These are matters of clear evidence. Now as Yuen-kwei-me has not been set on the throne, should the young lady return home, it will be no breach of faith towards the barbarians, and it will undoubtedly be for the welfare of China. Not only is the young lady a costly contribution to our state policy, but this is a turning point in our future prosperity." The Emperor accepted these suggestions, and recalled the young lady.

The Mad King again took to wife the Tsoo Princess Keae-yew, by whom he had a son named Che-me; but he did not live on amicable terms with the lady. Being cruel and tyrannical, he also lost the attachment of the people. The Han sent the Equestrian Master of the Guard, Wei Ho-e, and the Assistant, Marquis Jin Ch'ang, to escort home the hostage Prince; when the Imperial Princess took occasion to inform the envoys that the Mad King was a perfect scourge to the people of Wu-sun and that it would be easy to assassinate him. A plot was then conceived, in accordance with which an entertainment was given, at the close of which one of the soldiers of the envoys drew his sword and struck at the tyrant. Missing aim, however, the sword glanced down his side, merely wounding the Mad King, who then took to horse and galloped off. His son Sze-ch'in-chow assembled the troops, and surrounded Wei Ho-e, Jin Ch'ang, and the Imperial Princess, in the city of Chih-kuh. There they were detained for several months; till Ch'ing Keih, the Governor General, raised troops from the allied states, came to their rescue, and carried them off. The Chinese sent the Inner Gentleman Usher and General Chang Tsun with medical appliances for the cure of the Mad King; carrying also a gift of twenty pounds weight of gold, and various coloured silks. Wei Ho-e and Jin Ch'ang were chained together, and conveyed to Ch'ang-an in the criminal van, where they were decapitated. The Chariot Cavalry General and Chief Historiographer Chang Ung remained to take evidence in the case of the Princess's complicity in the plot of the envoys to take the Mad King's life. The Princess refusing to submit or apologise, Chang Ung seized her by the head and reviled her. The Princess reported the matter in a letter to the Emperor; and on his return Chang Ung was condemned to death. The Assistant Envoy Ke Too voluntarily

undertook the medical restoration of the Mad King; who appears to have been pleased with his treatment, and gave him an escort of a dozen horsemen on his departure. On Ke Too's return he was charged with knowing that the Mad King ought to be put to death, and having neglected to take advantage of the opportunity that offered. For this omission of duty he was cast into the silkworm-house....

[Details follow regarding Chinese support for the Wu-sun.]

Only a short time elapsed after this, when Yuen-kwei-me and Ch'e-me had both been carried off by sickness. After the death of her sons, the Princess [Keae-yew] then forwarded a letter to Court, saying:--"I am now old, my mind is burdened with thoughts about my native land; it is my wish to return, that my bones may rest in China." The Emperor sympathised with her in her sorrows, and went to meet her on her return.

The Princess reached the metropolis, accompanied by three of her grandchildren, in BCE 51. Being then 70 years old, the Emperor gave her a house and grounds, with a retinue of servants male and female, suitable to an Imperial Princess, and treated her with the greatest liberality. On her appearance at Court she was received with the decorum due to an imperial Princess.

Two years later [BCE 49] she died, and her three grand-children remained to pay attention to her grave...

[The text goes on to provide details of Chinese involvement in Wu-sun affairs down to the beginning of the Common Era. It then turns to brief descriptions of various small kingdoms in the oases west and north of the Taklamakan, the first being Koo-mih, which Wylie indicates is on the north bank of the Tarim River, and the next being Wansuh or Aksu near the modern town by the same name on the Kashgar River.] [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

Kwei-esze (Kuchay).

The capital of the kingdom of Kwei-tsze is the city of Yen, distant from Ch'ang-an 7,480 li. The kingdom contains 6,970 families, comprising a population of 81,317 persons. The army numbers 21,076. There are a Grand Protector General, a Sub-National Assistant Marquis, a Kingdom Pacifying Marquis, a Hoo-chastising Marquis, a Hoo-interjacent Protector General, a Keu-sze Chastising Protector General, a Left General, a Right General, a Left Protector General, a Right Protector General, a Left Knight, a Right Knight, a Left Strong Assistant, a Right Strong Assistant, two Colonels of the East, two Colonels of the West, two Colonels of the South, two Colonels of the North, three Hoo-interjacent Princes, and four Interpreters-in-chief. The country joins Tsing-tseue on the south, Tseay-muh on the southeast, Yu-me on the southwest, Wu-sun on the north, and Koo-mih on the west. The inhabitants are dextrous at founding and casting; and the country produces lead. The city of Woo-luy, the seat of the Governor General, lies 350 li to the east. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

Woo-luy.

Woo-luy contains 110 families, comprising 1,200 persons. It has 300 trained troops, a City Protector General, and an Interpreter-in-chief. The city is the seat of the Governor General. Keu-li lies 330 li to the south.

Keu-li.

Keu-li has a City Protector General. The state contains 130 families, comprising 1,480 persons. There are 150 troops. The country Joins Yu-li on the northeast, Tseay-muh on the southeast, and Tsing-tseue on the south. It is bounded on the west by a river, which leads to Kwei-tsze (Kuchay) at a distance of 580 li.

When a road to the Western regions was first opened up, in the reign of Wu-ti, a Deputy Protector was appointed, and a military colony planted in Keu-li. There were then incessant military complications, the troops were on the move for thirty-two years, and there was a general scarcity of provisions.

In the year BCE 90, the Urh-sze General Li Kwang-li being in command of the troops, effected the submission of the Hsiung-nu.

The Emperor being now weary of his distant military enterprises, the Show-suh Protector General Sang Hung-yang with the Prime Ministers and Censors, laid a memorial before the throne, to the following effect:

"From ancient Lun-t'ae (Yugur) eastward, Tsieh-che and Ken-li are both ancient states. The land is broad and fertile, and water and herbage are everywhere plentiful. There are about 800 acres of arable land. The climate is genial; the soil is excellent, and might be improved by drains and watercourses. The different kinds of grain grow there, and ripen about the same time as in China. Awls and knives are scarce in the neighbouring countries, and the people set a high value on gold and silk fabrics of various colours. These we might give in exchange for their grain; and thus secure a sufficiency of food to save us from want. Your servants in their ignorance beg to suggest, that military colonies might be placed at ancient Lun-t'ae and eastward, and three Deputy Protectors be appointed, to divide the defence of the country between them. Then each taking a plan of his own territory, a system of drains and watercourses might be carried out. More grain might then be sown in the season. It would thus be convenient to send Provisional Cavalry leaders from Chang-yay and Tsew-tseuen, to watch over the affairs of the Deputy Protectors. The appointment of horse-men would facilitate the transmission of reports of the annual produce of the cultivated land.

"Our dependent people would become robust and vigorous, thus strengthening our position, while those who ventured to remove their habitations would tend towards the cultivated fields; and following their original vocation of rearing cattle, they would also clear the irrigated land. It would be expedient gradually to erect guard-stations at intervals from the Great Wall westward, to keep the Western kingdoms in awe. Let Wu-sun be encouraged as a vassal to transmit the regular tribute. Let ministers of business make a lucid division of the several tribes; and proceeding to the borders, give strict injunctions to the Governors and Protectors General to be very clear in regard to lighting the beacon fires. Let troops and horses be selected, to keep a careful watch, and let provender be stored up for use. Desirous that Your Imperial Majesty would send envoys to the Western regions, to set their minds at rest, your servants in their blindness have laid themselves open to capital punishment, by presenting this their request." On receiving this, the Emperor issued a rescript, containing a doleful lamentation on past proceedings, in the following terms:

"Formerly the authorities memorialised to have the taxes of the people increased 30 per cent., in order to provide for the border expenses: which proved a heavy burden on the aged and feeble, the orphans and childless. Now, again, a request is presented for troops to be sent to cultivate Lun-t'ae. This territory lies more than 1,000 li west of Keu-sze. Formerly when the Marquis of Keae-ling attacked the Keu-sze, the young princes of six kingdoms, including Wei-sew (Chagan-tungi), Yu-li (Kalga-aman), and Lou-lan, who were residing at the imperial metropolis, all returned to their homes in advance, and sent animals to meet and provision the Chinese army; while the kings in person, at the head of several tens of thousands of troops, combined to surround the Keu-sze. On the submission of the king of the latter, it was judged expedient to suspend military operations by these several kingdoms; and they were unable again to offer provisions to the Chinese army on the road. When the Chinese troops capture a city, the consumption of provisions is very great; and what the men carry with them is totally inadequate to meet the wants. Eventually the more robust of the troops consume all the animals, while several thousand of the feebler die on the roads. I have sent mules and camels carrying food from Tsew-tseuen, by the Jade gate, which have met the men and officers of the army at no great distance beyond Chang-yay; but still there was a very large number of the retainers left behind. Formerly when I did not understand these matters, Keun How-hung forwarded a despatch saying, "The Hsiung-nu tied their horses by the fore and hind legs, and placing them under the city wall, sent a message to the men of Ts'in, saying, "We beg these horses."

"Again, when an envoy from the Han was for a long time detained by them, and did not return, an army was sent under the command of the Urh-sze general to vindicate the dignity and importance of the envoy. Anciently, when the high ministers and great statesmen held a consultation, if on examining the tortoise the prognostic was infelicitous, they desisted from action. Now taking the despatch on the bound horses, I looked round on the prime ministers, censors, two thousand stone stipendiary great statesmen, the secretaries of literary pretension, even to the Protectors General of the regions and dependent states, Ching Chung, Chaou Po-noo and others; who all considered that captives binding their own horses was extremely infelicitous. Some said, when put to the test, what is insufficient for the powerful may be excessive for others. The augury by the 'Book of Changes' gave the Ta kwo ('greatness in excess') diagram, the stroke being the fifth-nine. When the Hsiung-nu suffered a grievous defeat, the summoning officers, provosts of regions, historiographers, astronomers, and meteorologists were consulted; and the grand augur with the tortoise and divining plant all indicated a felicitous response. The Hsiung-nu must be reduced, and no further prognostic could be obtained." The rescript also said:--"If we undertake a northern invasion, we shall certainly be victorious at the Foo mountains. The lot being cast for a general, that for the Urh-sze was most felicitous. I therefore personally commissioned the Urh-sze general to proceed to the Foo mountains, with the command that he should certainly not proceed farther. Now to deliberate on the prognostics of the diagrams is altogether misleading. The words of the spies who were taken prisoners by the marquis are

eminently confirmatory of this, where they say,--'The Hsiung-nu, on hearing that the Chinese army was advancing, sent wizards to bury sheep and oxen on all the roads and watercourses by which they might come, in order to bring a curse on the forces.' When the Shen-yu presents horses or cloaks to the emperor, he causes the wizards to bless them. Binding the horses implies a curse on the army. Again the lot was cast for another general for the Chinese army; but the prognostic was infelicitous. The Hsiung-nu are accustomed to say,--'China is an exceeding great country, and cannot be destroyed by hunger and thirst.' But one wolf can put to flight a thousand sheep; and the numbers who were slain, taken captive, and dispersed on occasion of the Urh-sze general's defeat have been a perpetual load of grief on my heart. Now the request is made to form a camp at Lun-t'ae; whence it is proposed to erect a line of guard stations. That, indeed, would embarrass the empire, and is not the way to tranquilise the people. Now I cannot bear to listen to the talk of the banqueting-house magnates. Again, they are proposing to send prisoners to escort the Hsiung-nu envoy back. This illustrates conferring a marquisate to allay irritation; five earls having been unsuccessful. Moreover, when any of the Chinese submit to the Hsiung-nu, they are always taken aside and submitted to a searching examination; by which means the Hsiung-nu have become informed regarding the defenceless state of the present uncared for and dilapidated border fortifications. The chief officials of the look-out towers send the guards to hunt wild animals, for the sake of their skins and flesh. The men are in a miserable condition; the beacon fires are unattended to, and it would be impossible to assemble the forces. Subsequently, should those who have submitted to the Hsiung-nu bring an aggressive force, when we take some captives we shall ascertain the truth. We ought now to apply ourselves to prevent oppressive annoyances, and put a stop to arbitrary imposts. Let agriculturists sedulously pursue their avocations. Let horses be provided, and fresh orders issued to repair the breaches, and make good all deficiencies in the military defences. Let every chief of a state or region of two-thousand-stone-revenue send in trained horses, and plans for restoring the border erections, with estimates of the expense." After this the troops were not called forth. The prime minister Keu Tseen-ts'ew was made Foo-min marquis, which shows the consideration given to the enrichment and culture of the people in the time of peace....

About the same time [the reign of Seu-en-te, BCE 73-49], a daughter of the Imperial Princess of Wu-sun, who had been sent to China to learn to play the kin [a long lute-like instrument], was sent back by the Chinese, under the escort of a vice-president with music, to accompany the young lady past Kwei-tsze. The king of Kwei-tsze had already sent a messenger to Wu-sun to ask the hand of the princess' daughter; and before the messenger had returned, the young lady had reached Kwei-tsze. The king of Kwei-tsze thereupon detained her; and instead of forwarding her on the way, sent another envoy to report the matter to the princess. The princess acceded to the king's desire.

After this the princess forwarded a despatch, requesting that her daughter might be received at court as a member of the imperial house. Keang-pin, the king of Kwei-tsze, who was tenderly attached to his wife, also forwarded a despatch, saying, that as he had married a grand-daughter of the house of Han, and was consequently united by a fraternal bond, he wished to come to court with the daughter of the imperial princess.

The above request in both cases seems to have been granted, for in the year BCE 65, the king and his consort came to court. The emperor received them graciously, conferring on each a seal and ribbon. The lady was gazetted as an imperial princess, and received presents of carriages, riding horses, flags, drums, singers, and pipers, several tens of persons in all; also fret and embroidered work, silks of various colours, gems and rarities, to the value of several tens of millions of taels. They remained a year, and were then sent away with costly presents.

After this they came several times to court, and were most graciously received, adopting the Chinese dress and manners. On their return home the king built a palace, with a wall and road surrounding the royal precincts. On going out and entering, the word was passed, and a big drum was beat, according to the Chinese palace customs. With these innovations, the Hoo of these countries were accustomed to say:--"An ass is no ass, and a horse is no horse; but what the king of Kwei-tsze calls a mule." When Keang-pin died, his son Ching'tih designated himself a grandson of the house of Han.

During the reigns of Ching-te and Gae-te [BCE 32-1] there was a more frequent intercourse with China, and the Kwei-tsze king was received on more intimate terms.

Eastward from Keu-li, the road leads to Yu-li (Kalga-aman), at a distance of 650 li... [[Back to Contents](#)]

Yen-ke (Karashar).

The capital of the kingdom of Yen-ke is the city of Yuen-keu, distant from Ch'ang-an 7,300 li. The kingdom

contains 4,000 families, comprising a population of 32,100 persons. The army numbers 6,000; and there are a Hoo~chastising Marquis, a Hoo-interjacent Marquis, a National Assistant Marquis, a Right General, a Left General, a Right Protector General, a Left Protector General, a Right Hoo-chastising prince, a Left Hoo-chastising prince, a Keu-sze chastising prince, a Kou-sze reforming prince, two Hoo-chastising Protectors General, two Hoo-chastising princes, and three Interpreters-in-chief. The seat of the Governor General lies to the southwest at a distance of 400 li. Yu-li lies 100 li south. The country joins Wu-sun on the north. There is a lake [Bostang] in the vicinity, the waters of which contain abundance of fish....

Poo-luy (Urumtsi).

The capital of the kingdom of Poo-luy is in the Soo-yu valley on the west of the T'een-shan range, distant from Ch'ang-an 8,360 li. The kingdom contains 325 families, comprising a population of 2,032 persons. The army numbers 799. There are a National Assistant Marquis, a Right general, a Left general, a Right Protector general, and a Left Protector general. The seat of the Governor General lies 1,387 li to the southwest.... [\[Back to Contents\]](#)

Anterior Keu-sze (Turfan).

The capital of the kingdom of Anterior Keu-sze is the city of Keaou-ho. The waters of the river there divide and flow round the city walls; hence the name Keaou-ho (confluent river). The city is distant from Ch'ang-an 8,150 li. The kingdom contains 700 families, comprising a population of 6,050 persons. The army numbers 1,865. There are a National Assistant Marquis, a National pacifying Marquis, a Right general, a Left general, a Protector general, a China reverting Protector general, a Keu-sze prince, an Arbitration prince, a Rural improvement prince, and two interpreters-in-chief. The seat of the Governor General lies southwest at a distance of 1237 li...

[The last major section of the treatise deals with the history of the "Ulterior Kue-sze presidency," whose exact location is difficult to determine.]

....

During the period Yuen-che [CE 1-6], a new road was opened up from Ulterior Keu-sze, north of Woo-chuen, as far as the Jade gate barrier, thus shortening the communication. This road had been made by Sen Tsin-yuh, the Woo-ke Deputy Protector, to shorten the distance by a half, and evade the dangers of the white dragon mound. Koo-keu the king of Ulterior Keu-sze, however, believing that the road might prove a check to his movements, looked upon it as an inconvenience...

Some years later (CE 23)...the power of China in the Western regions was at a minimum....

Pan Koo's Reflections on the Preceding Notes.

In the reign of the Emperor Wu-ti, when plans were formed for arresting the Hsiung-nu disasters, these having formed a compact with the Southern Keang from the kingdoms in the West, four regions were established along the bend of the Yellow River, and the Jade gate was opened as a thoroughfare to the Western regions. The right arm of the Hsiung-nu was thus cut off, and a through separation effected between them and the Southern Keang and the Ta Yue-she nations; The Shen-yu being thus utterly baffled, removed his encampment to a great distance, and ceased to hold his court in the south. During the reigns of Wan-te and King-te, the people were nourished in a period of peaceful tranquillity. For five generations the empire was prosperous and wealthy; riches and strength were superabundant; while troops and horses were robust, and in good condition. Hence the people could attend to agriculture, and tortoise-shell being disseminated, Choo-yae and six other regions were added to the empire. Thanks to the Keu soy and bamboo staves; Tsang-ko and Yue-suy were annexed. The reports regarding the celestial horses and grapes led to the opening up of communication with Fergana and Parthia. From this time carbuncles, tortoise-shell, white heart rhinoceros horn, plumagery and, such rarities were found in profusion in the after palace; foreign palfreys, dragon-figured, fish-eyed, and blood-perspiring horses thronged the imperial gates; while a menagerie of great elephants, lions, savage dogs, and large birds fed in the park outside; and strange objects arrived from foreign lands in every direction. At the same time the imperial forest was enlarged, the Kwan-ming pool was excavated, the palace of a thousand gates and ten thousand doors was built, and the tower of communication between Heaven and the spiritual powers was erected. The cyclical screens were formed of fine silk, with rows of pearls and harmonizing gems; and the Emperor, while occupying the palace, wore the hatchet

embroidered robe, and variegated lower garment, and rested on a jade stand. Amid this luxuriance there were pools of wine and forests of flesh, for the entertainment of the barbarian guests arriving from all quarters. There were also the Pa and Yu acrobatic feats, and the T'ang-keih music of transmarine nations. Huge monsters roamed about, while the waters teemed with fish and dragons. The dramatist gave his entertainments to gratify the assembled multitudes. Presents were made, and visitors were escorted back for ten thousand li; till the expenses of such expeditions surpassed calculation. At length the revenue was found to be inadequate. The wine was then sold off; the sale of salt and iron was brought under regulation; and coins of white metal were cast, to use for presents representing the skins and silks. The carriages and boats were let out on hire; the strength of the people and the domestic animals was bent with oppression; while their wealth was utterly exhausted. The result was years of dearth; added to which, highway robberies became so common that the public thoroughfares were impassable. The moral is this:--when a nation begins by a display of embroidered garments, and by the free use of the military, cuts itself off from the other regions and states, it ends by being itself conquered. Thus it happened that in the later years the territory of Lun-t'ae was abandoned, and the Emperor publicly proclaimed his distress. Truly this is a subject of remorse for the benevolent and the sage.

Among the dangers of the passage through the Western regions, are, near home the dragon mound; and more remote, the Tsung-ling mountains, the Fever Bank, the Head-ache Mountain, and the Hindu Kush Range. Speaking of the latter, the Prince of Hwae-nan, Too Kin, and Yang Heung, all designate it as the boundary province between heaven and earth, the point of absolute separation between the interior and exterior. It is said in the Shoo King:--"The wild tribes of the West all coming to submit to Yu's arrangements." Yu having come, they fell in with his arrangements. It was not that they were brought to submit to the imperial dignity, and so induced to bring tribute. The various countries of the Western regions having each one its prince and its troops, are divided and weak, having no common bond of unity. Although subject to the Hsiung-nu, they have no intimate bond of attachment. The Hsiung-nu obtain horses, cattle, and woven fabrics from them; but have never been able to cultivate a mutual intercourse with them. They are utterly cut off from China by the nature of the country; and being at such an impracticable distance, it is no advantage to be on good terms with them, and we lose nothing by abandoning them. The source of prosperity is in ourselves, and we gain nothing by them.

Hence, since CE 25, the powers of the Western regions, in view of the dignity of the Chinese empire, have generally rejoiced to maintain an attachment. Some of the smaller states, such as Shen-shen and Keu-sze, whose borders are hard upon the Hsiung-nu, have been retained by the latter; but the larger kingdorns, such as Sha-keu (Yarkand), and Yu-teen (Khoten), have repeatedly sent envoys and placed hostages with China; desiring to be under the care of the Governor General. Our sacred Emperor taking a wide survey of history past and present, and studying the exigencies of the time, keeps them under restraint; not absolutely repelling their advances, while carefully avoiding promises. The Great Yu, when he rendered the wild tribes of the West submissive; Chow Kung, when he yielded the white pheasant, and T'ae-tsung in his misunderstanding about the running horse, are all instances of the same principle, and may be adduced in its support. [\[Back to Contents\]](#)
