

Aurel Stein's Dealings with Wang Yuanlu and Chinese Officials in Dunhuang in 1907

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Aurel Stein had become experienced at dealing with Chinese officials during his First Central Asian Expedition (1900–1) in Xinjiang Province. In his formal application to the Government of India for his Second Central Asian Expedition, Stein wrote:

Previous experience has shown me the importance of securing the willing co-operation of the Chinese District authorities. Effective means for this purpose are, besides official recommendations from Kashgar, suitably selected presents for the chief local Magistrates. ... Consequently I feel obliged to suggest for 'Tosha Khana' purpose a sum of 1,500 (Rs.).¹

Stein also suggested that:

In the event of my proposals being approved by the Government of India, I requested that timely steps may be taken to secure for me the necessary passport from the Chinese Government, enabling me to travel in the territory of Chinese Turkestan as well as in the province of Kan-suh [Gansu] and if necessary further east. A specific mention of my official position would be distinctly useful, and I hope, therefore, it will be possible to draw the attention of His Majesty's Embassy at Peking to this point.²

Sir Ernest Satow, H.M. Minister at Peking did indeed pay attention to this point.³ Stein's Chinese passport was issued by the Wai-wu-pu ([Waiwubu 外务部] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chinese Foreign Office) on 10 September 1905, in which he was given the status of *Da Ying zongli jiaoyu dachen* 大英国总理教育大臣. This is a strange appellation and can be translated literally as 'Prime Minister of Education of Great Britain'.⁴ The effect of this would be felt in different ways. Stein would later grumble about

those formal visits which seemed to have grown more exacting since the style of my new Chinese passport from the Wai-wu-pu had promoted me to the rank of a Ta-jên [*dachen* 大臣] or 'Excellency'.⁵

But to the Chinese officials and ordinary people of Xinjiang and Gansu, those formalities reflected the very high status of such an important guest (whose official position was also expressed 'Prime Minister of India', 'Viceroy of the British India', 'Prime Minister of Great Britain').⁶ How could they refuse him anything?

Stein entered Chinese territory on 29 May 1906 and arrived at Kashgar on 8 June 1906. With the assistance of George Macartney, British Political Agent at Kashgar, Stein engaged Jiang Xiaowan 蒋孝琬 (Chiang Ssü-yeh [Jiang shiye] 蒋师爷) from Yarkand as his Chinese secretary. An educated man, Jiang Xiaowan had been private secretary (Ssü-yeh) to several officials in Gansu and Xinjiang since 1883 but felt rather disappointed with his career. He thought Fortune was smiling on him when he was engaged by Stein. In the course of the next two years, Jiang Xiaowan helped Stein with all his heart and all his might. When one speaks of Stein's dealings with Wang Yuanlu and Chinese officials, it would be more accurate to call them Jiang Xiaowan's dealings with Wang Yuanlu and Chinese officials on behalf of Stein.⁷

Stein and Jiang Xiaowan travelled from Xinjiang to Gansu, and arrived in Dunhuang in March 1907 at a critical moment. Local peasants were on the point of revolting against sustained misgovernment by the authorities. Since

1726, the provincial government had relocated thousands of poor peasant farmers from all quarters of Gansu to the sparsely populated Dunhuang oasis to open up wasteland. It was stipulated that every household (defined as having 50 *mu* of land) should pay a regular land tax (*tunliang* 屯粮) to the government, namely 2.34 dan (hectolitres) of grain per year. From 1730 on, in addition to the regular land tax, every household was required to sell a further 4 *dan* of grain to the government each year as a contribution to the expenses of the local military or administrative offices. This quota was known as the *caimailiang* 采买粮. In time, the monetary payment from the government for the 4 *dan* quota disappeared and the *caimailiang* simply became an extra tax. In the late Qing dynasty, the peasant farmers of Dunhuang made frequent petitions to different levels of local government asking for the abolition of the *caimailiang* system. But their demands were refused and any resistance was suppressed.⁸

In April 1902, Wang Zonghan 汪宗翰 (b.1845) held the post of Magistrate of Dunhuang. During his term of office (1902–6), the *caimailiang* crisis became increasingly serious. In 1904, the provincial government announced measures to limit people's income. Irritated by this sign of reform, a dozen rich and influential farmers of Dunhuang, under the leadership of Zhang Huming and his brother Zhang Jianming, signed a petition which they submitted to Wang Zonghan requesting an exemption from the *caimailiang* tax. Wang Zonghan not only refused the petition, but also threw some of the petitioners into prison. The enraged leaders of the peasant farmers vowed to bring down the *caimailiang* system and, from autumn 1905, the peasant farmers all refused to pay the *caimailiang* tax. They also made constant complaints about Wang Zonghan's misgovernment to the Magistrate of Anxi, the Daotai of Suzhou, and even the Viceroy of Shaanxi and Gansu, who was resident in Lanzhou. In March 1906, Wang Zonghan was transferred from Dunhuang to Lanzhou, and Huang Wanchun 黄万春 succeeded him as Magistrate of Dunhuang.⁹

Huang Wanchun's first priority was to deal with the *caimailiang* crisis. He employed hard and soft tactics, and on one occasion in September 1906 invited several dozen of the more compliant peasant farmers to a banquet at which he asked them to play a leading role in enforcing the *caimailiang* tax. The effect was to split the peasant farmers into two factions. Realising that the radicals were harassing the moderates, and that the majority of peasant farmers were still refusing to pay the *caimailiang* tax, Huang Wanchun had no choice but to order the arrest of the chief radicals.¹⁰

The *caimailiang* tax had been indispensable for covering administrative and military expenditures at Dunhuang. So it is understandable that the provincial government felt anxious about the crisis. By the end of 1906, Sheng Yun 升允, Viceroy of Shaanxi and Gansu (Shaan-Gan zongdu 陕甘总督), dispatched Wang Jiayan 王家彦 (d.1913) to Dunhuang to investigate the situation on the ground. Wang Jiayan had been magistrate of various districts of Gansu since at least 1902 and was renowned for his competence and effectiveness. After his investigations at Dunhuang, Wang Jiayan submitted a report to Viceroy Sheng Yun to the effect that both government and peasants should make concessions to each

other and that the *caimailiang* tax should be reduced by half, from 4 *dan* to 2 *dan*. In the spring of 1907, Wang Jiayan was appointed Magistrate of Dunhuang with a special mission to resolve the *caimailiang* problem once and for all. On the evening of 11 March 1907, the official seal was passed from Huang Wanchun to Wang Jiayan. It was the very same day that Stein and Jiang Xiaowan and their entourage entered the Dunhuang oasis, and in the morning of 12 March 1907, Stein and his party prepared to make their entry into the town of Dunhuang.

They did not arrive unannounced. On his arrival in Gansu province, Stein had sent a telegraphic salutation to Viceroy Sheng Yun in Lanzhou. Four months earlier, in December 1906, Pan Zhen 潘震, Daotai of Aksu – who had been an official in both Gansu and Xinjiang for 40 years and an old friend of Stein's since 1900 – had written a series of letters of recommendation to officials in the main districts of western Gansu, including Huang Wanchun, Magistrate of Dunhuang.¹¹ But Wang Jiayan was new to his post, and had not yet acquainted himself with any official documents or letters concerning Stein's visit, and consequently neglected this unexpected visitor. When Stein paid his first visit to Wang Jiayan at the Magistrate's Office on 13 March, he

had just managed to dig out from his predecessor's office records the elegantly worded epistle by which my Tao-t'ai patron had recommended me to the magistrate's attention. He was evidently impressed by its contents; and I instinctively felt that a kindly official providence had brought to Tun-huang just the right man to help me in my first work on these ancient Marches.¹²

Yet, for the newly arrived Wang Jiayan, whose foremost concern was to deal with the pressing *caimailiang* problem, it must have come as a great shock to have such a distinguished foreign guest as the 'Prime Minister of Education of Great Britain' turn up at his office on his second day, requesting his assistance.

Stein then paid a visit to Lin Taiqing, Commander of the Shazhou Battalion (the military forces of Dunhuang), who was in charge of local public security. Lin Taiqing had risen from the ranks and had been attached to the escort of Emperor Guangxu and the Empress Dowager on their flight to Xi'an in 1900–1. Lin Taiqing was rewarded for his meritorious behaviour and appointed Commander of the Shazhou Battalion in 1902. He had been in Dunhuang ever since. Before their first meeting on 13 March 1907, Lin Taiqing had dispatched some soldiers to act as Stein's camp guard. Stein soon realized that it was Lin Taiqing who controlled Dunhuang, writing that:

our prolonged visit to the district was evidently welcomed by him as a pleasant diversion, and the help of his myrmidons which he pressed upon us as a safeguard against the obstructive indolence and occasional turbulence of the Tun-huang people in general, soon proved useful in more than one way. That Lin Ta-jên enjoyed more authority in his own sphere than Wang, the newly arrived civilian, did in his, was quite clear... Luckily the two dignitaries were on excellent terms, and the magistrate was only too anxious to let me benefit by the predominant local influence of his military colleague.¹³

Stein had some notion of the serious situation created by local *caimailiang* crisis and the contradictions between officials

and peasants, though found it difficult to get straight answers beyond ‘that impenetrable “Pu chih-tao” [*bu zhidao*], “I do not know”’.¹⁴ He faced ‘the deep-rooted secretiveness of the local Chinese population’¹⁵ and was aware that ‘the suspicious reticence of the people proved a terrible barrier throughout’.¹⁶ And he did not realise that officials in Dunhuang were feigning ignorance of ancient remains:

Of the ruins I was anxious to trace and explore in the desert nothing was known to our friends the magistrate and military commander, or to the other educated Chinese officials of Tun-huang, though they seemed interested in my work and ready to help.¹⁷

Neither the officials nor the common people of Dunhuang wanted to encourage Stein to prolong his stay there. Finally, Stein turned to the Turkī traders in Dunhuang for help. It was through Zahīd Bēg from Urumchi that Stein first heard about the discovery of a library cave, now known as Cave 17, at the Mogao Grottoes.

Cave 17 had been discovered, by accident, by Wang Yuanlu 王圓祿 (Wang Tao-shih [Wang daoshi] 王道士, 1850?–1931) about seven years previously, on 22 June 1900. Since its discovery, and particularly after Wang Zonghan’s appointment as Magistrate of Dunhuang in 1902, its contents had been in the process of dispersion. Through Wang Yuanlu and Wang Zonghan, ancient manuscripts and paintings found their way into the hands of many officials in Gansu. Some specimens had also been sent to the provincial headquarters in Lanzhou, but transportation of the entire library – estimated at seven cart-loads – had been delayed. In May 1904, the provincial government ordered Wang Zonghan to restore the whole of the find to its original place of deposit. Consequently Wang Zonghan and all the civil and military officials of Dunhuang had come to the Mogao Grottoes to look over all manuscripts in Cave 17, and Wang Zonghan had ordered Wang Yuanlu to take good care of them in their original place. Wang Yuanlu attached a rough wooden door to the opening of Cave 17 and installed a lock on it. The key to the lock was kept by Wang Yuanlu himself.

On 16 March 1907, Stein and Jiang Xiaowan, accompanied by an official attendant, made their first visit to the Mogao Grottoes in order to gain a better understanding of the library cave. Wang Yuanlu happened to be away at the time; he was a monk and was on an alms round in the Dunhuang oasis. A young Buddhist monk helped Stein to locate Cave 17. From 23 March to 15 May, Stein worked in the desert north of the Dunhuang oasis. At the end of March, in response to Stein’s telegraphic salutation some weeks earlier, Viceroy Sheng Yun sent a telegraphic circular to several Daotais and to all Magistrates, strongly recommending Stein to official notice.

Having finished his fieldwork north of Dunhuang, Stein returned to town on 15 May, eager to start his work at the Mogao Grottoes. But he had to wait until after the local festival on 19 May (the 8th day of the 4th month according to the lunar calendar, Śākyamuni’s birthday), and the annual pilgrimage to the site. As Stein waited, Jiang Xiaowan secretly made contact with Wang Yuanlu in town, and arranged for Wang Yuanlu to await Stein’s arrival at the Mogao Grottoes.

At 4 p.m. on 21 May, Stein and his party reached the Mogao Grottoes. Wang Jiayan and Lin Taiqing had provided an officer and some soldiers of the Dunhuang army to accompany Stein’s group to the grottoes in order to watch and guard them. On the morning of 22 May, Stein was welcomed by Wang Yuanlu, whom he described as ‘a very curious figure, extremely shy and nervous, with a face bearing an occasional furtive expression of cunning which was far from encouraging’.¹⁸ With ulterior motives, Stein pretended not to be interested in Cave 17, but set to work on what ostensibly was the main object of his stay: surveying and photographing. As Stein worked in the morning, Jiang Xiaowan was sent to sound out Wang Yuanlu in a confidential fashion. The promise of a liberal donation persuaded Wang Yuanlu to agree that Stein might see some specimens from the collection. On the afternoon of 22 May, Stein, accompanied by Jiang Xiaowan, paid a formal visit to Wang Yuanlu. Before evening, Jiang Xiaowan had seen Cave 17 and had brought away a first packet of sūtra rolls ‘for inspection’.

At noon the next day, 23 May, Stein saw the contents of Cave 17 for the first time:

The day was cloudless and hot, and the “soldiers” who had followed me about during the morning with my cameras, were now taking their siesta in sound sleep soothed by a good smoke of opium. So accompanied only by Chiang I went to the temple.¹⁹

Wang Yuanlu opened the door of Cave 17 to them. From that afternoon and for the next six days (until 28 May), Stein selected manuscripts and paintings from various bundles in the antechapel with its side room and passage, the hidden ‘reading room’ within Cave 16. The selection was done in secret, and was not noticed by any soldiers or worshippers.

At the end of the afternoon of 23 May, with Jiang Xiaowan’s persuasion and 103 miskals (equivalent to 10.3 *liang*/taels) of silver as ‘compensation for MSS.’, Wang Yuanlu agreed that Stein’s selected documents might be moved away:

The Tao-shih had summoned up courage to fall in with my wishes, on the solemn condition that nobody besides us three was to get the slightest inkling of what was being transacted, and that as long as I kept Chinese soil the origin of these “finds” was not to be revealed to any living being.¹⁹

So, Jiang Xiaowan took it upon himself to be the sole carrier between 23 and 30 May: ‘For seven nights more he thus came to my tent, when everybody had gone to sleep, with the same precautions’.²⁰

On the morning of 27 May, Wang Yuanlu raised the question of a donation for the temple. Stein took up the theme in order to suggest a possible purchase, but made it clear that no definite offer could be made until he had seen the full extent of the collection. Lured by Stein’s offer of money, Wang Yuanlu, with the help of his assistant and Jiang Xiaowan, spent the afternoon moving all the bundles of manuscripts from Cave 17. Stein came to the ‘conclusion that purchase in part would mean possible havoc & that an effort must be made to save the whole’.²¹

On the morning of 28 May, Stein realized that ‘the removal of so many cart-loads of manuscripts would

inevitably give publicity to the whole transaction, and the religious resentment this was likely to arouse in Tun-huang, even if it did not lead to more serious immediate consequences, would certainly compromise my chance of further work in Kan-su'.²² But he 'was prepared to face these risks rather than forgo the endeavour to rescue the whole hoard'.²³ In terms of the price he was prepared to pay, Stein hinted at 40 horse-shoes of silver (= 2000 *liang*/taels) and was ready to give twice as much. But Wang Yuanlu refused his offer to buy all the manuscripts. Stein recorded in his diary of 28 May:

Lengthy negotiations on plain trade basis. Asked at first 2 Yambus for 20 bundles, but finally accepted offer of 3 Yambus (M. 1500, incl. M. 340 already paid) for all selections previously made + 50 bundles of texts.²⁴

On the morning of 29 May, Stein and Jiang Xiaowan went to collect their selected items. The transaction was settled by 11.30 a.m. to mutual satisfaction. In order to avoid the eyes of the supervisory soldiers, Stein dispatched Tila Bai and Ibrāhim Bēg, his two trusted followers, to assist Jiang Xiaowan in transporting the selected items on the last two nights. They moved furtively between Cave 16 and Stein's camp screened by the shadow of the steep river bank. The huge sackfuls of documents were safely transferred to Stein's store-room without any one, not even Stein's own men, having any suspicion of what was happening.

On the morning of 31 May, a military officer of Dunhuang was sent by Lin Taiqing to visit the Mogao Grottoes, apparently for the purpose of investigating Stein's activities. Uneasy, and probably with a guilty conscience, Wang Yuanlu went into town that day to resume his seasonal alms round.²⁵

While Stein busied himself with his work at the Mogao Grottoes, Wang Jiayan devoted himself to settling the *caimailiang* issue. In April/May 1907 he had announced that the *caimailiang* tax would be halved, from 4 *dan* to 2 *dan*, but insisted that the taxes that the peasants had refused to pay in 1905–6 were still owed, and must be paid. He agreed that they could pay in instalments. Most peasants were willing to make a concession, but their leaders, Zhang Huming and his brother Zhang Jianming, refused to pay the tax on principle, and could not accept Wang Jiayan's conditions. Wang Jiayan asked Lin Taiqing and other local officials to talk to the Zhang brothers, but when this did not produce results, a furious Wang Jiayan decided to resolve the matter by force. However, Stein was still in the area, and fearful of causing a rebellion and thus of putting such a distinguished foreign guest in any danger, Wang Jiayan reluctantly postponed any military action.

Stein's long stay at Dunhuang during such an eventful period had already given alarm. Chai Hongshan, Commander-in-chief of the Suzhou Garrison responsible for peace in western Gansu, wrote a report to Viceroy Sheng Yun in April 1907, apparently based on Wang Jiayan and Lin Taiqing's report. Chai wrote that he believed that Stein's archaeological activities would necessarily turn towards tombs, that this would arouse popular prejudice and thus not only expose Stein to personal risk, but also expose the provincial government to serious inconvenience. Viceroy

Sheng Yun promptly gave instructions enjoining Wang Jiayan to dissuade Stein – with all diplomatic politeness – from any attempt at excavation.²⁶

On the afternoon of 1 June, Wang Jiayan, on his tour to Anxi, made a detour to the Mogao Grottoes to see Stein and convey Viceroy Sheng Yun's orders. Wang Jiayan came too late to affect Stein's transaction with Wang Yuanlu. He had no knowledge of the transaction at all and made no reference to the manuscripts when he saw Stein. Stein was glad about this, but could not help feeling uneasy when he learned confidentially, through Jiang Xiaowan, of Wang Jiayan's purpose in coming. On the morning of 2 June, Stein sent Jiang Xiaowan to town for a couple of days in order to persuade Wang Jiayan to write plain reports to the Daotai of Suzhou and Viceroy Sheng Yun explaining that most of Stein's work lay in the desert and that it was harmless.

During the night of 5 June, Jiang Xianwan returned from town with the assurance that Wang Jiayan had sent a report by wire to Suzhou explaining the innocent nature of Stein's 'hobby'.²⁵ Wang Yuanlu also returned from town at this time. Reassured that no one in town knew about his secret transaction with Stein, he felt encouraged to make a second transaction on 6 June. To avoid attracting the attention of the accompanying Chinese soldiers the whole collection was brought to Stein's camp as late as 11 p.m.

Having settled up for the second transaction, Stein was ready to pack up the antiquities from 7 June. Local upheavals combined with fears of diphtheria were forcing Stein to leave the Mogao Grottoes as soon as possible. In the course of the packing work, Lin Taiqing came to visit Stein at the Mogao Grottoes on the morning of 9 June. Lin Taiqing's visit, shortly after Wang Jiayan's, aimed to investigate Stein's activities and persuade him to leave this troubled place at the earliest opportunity. Lin Taiqing confided that both he and Wang Jiayan had deemed it prudent to delay any military action until Stein was safely out of the district. Stein appreciated their consideration, for he had come down with a fever and suffered severe swelling of the face since 7 June. Lin Taiqing talked up the prevalence of the diphtheria epidemic in Dunhuang, apparently for the purpose of frightening Stein away as soon as possible.

Dunhuang had been riddled with diphtheria during the late Qing dynasty, with the most virulent attacks occurring in 1870, 1871, 1895 and 1900:

If one person contracted diphtheria, the whole family could not escape death. If one family contracted diphtheria, the whole street could not escape unscathed. Only one in every ten sufferers survived. Sometimes an entire family died out. Sometimes blood relatives or brothers have to be deserted without care.²⁶

In 1907, Dunhuang was rife with diphtheria. When Stein visited the Mogao Grottoes for the first time on 16 March, he saw *en route* 'a shrine with some modest annexes for the priests. The dwellers were absent, probably assisting in the celebrations which were reported [as] being held in the town in order to drive off an epidemic attack described like influenza'.²⁷ Stein recorded Lin Taiqing's words of 9 June:

Nan-Darin [Lin Daren = Lin Taiqing] estimates present population of Tun-huang at 80,000 souls. More than this number died in Kang-hsi [rect. Kuang-hsu = Guangxu]²¹ (1895)

by an epidemic similar to the one now causing many deaths in city, appar. a kind of diphtheria. Young soldier boy who used to watch my camp, succumbed a few days ago.

The young soldier boy had died of diphtheria in early June, and Stein made 'compensation for services of soldier (dead)' on 12 June with 50 Miskals (5 *liang*/taels) of silver.

Lin Taiqing's visit quickened Stein's leaving. Stein continued his packing on 9 June in spite of being 'weary with fever'.²⁸ On 10 June, Stein felt 'very tired with low fever',²⁹ but he still 'approached Tao-shi with suggestions of subsequent cession of *kings*, but met by former apprehension, etc'.³⁰ On 11 June, Stein paid 110 Miskals (11 *liang*/taels) of silver as a 'reward to Military Daloi & Escort'³¹ who had turned a blind eye to Stein's activities over a three-week period at the Mogao Grottoes.

Stein left the Mogao Grottoes on 12 June. Before leaving, Jiang Xiaowan scratched an inscription with a knife on the wall of a cave describing when and how he accompanied Stein the British Prime Minister in visiting the grottoes. Stein recorded his last impression of Wang Yuanlu:

When I finally said good-bye to the 'Thousand Buddhas', his jovial sharp-cut face had resumed once more its look of shy but self-contented serenity. We parted in fullest amity.³²

Stein arrived back at the town of Dunhuang, and went to bid everyone farewell: 'see first Nan-Darin [Lin Taiqing] & then Wang-Daloi [Wang Jiayan]. Another pleasant talk with refined scholar. He has smoothed my ways at An-shi [Anxi] & reassured Su-chou Tao-tai about my designs. His grey-haired mother, a dignified matron, sat for family group. Reassembled at Nan-Darin's for quiet meal.' Stein left the town of Dunhuang that evening. He

found Ambans & all their *kuans* [*guan*] assembled to bid me farewell at temple outside NE gate. Crowd of officials in red-tasselled hats, a picture well framed by polychrome temple portico. In shadow of high temple a scene of the old East, my last impression of Tun-huang.

This was also the last time he would see Lin Taiqing.

Stein arrived at Anxi on 17 June 1907. He visited En Guang, Magistrate of Anxi, and deposited all his collections from Dunhuang at the Magistrate's Office. Stein left Anxi on 24 June for further explorations and arrived at Suzhou [Jiuquan] on 22 July.

Since Stein's departure from Dunhuang, Wang Jiayan had been preoccupied with the tax problem. The day after Stein's arrival in Suzhou (23 July), in the dead of night, Wang Jiayan dispatched He Lin, his close attendant, and 20 soldiers with guns to arrest Zhang Huming in the suburban Zhang's Village. In the course of the fighting, Zhang Huming was shot dead and the Zhang family was humiliated and aggrieved. Aware that Zhang Huming's death would inevitably result in a rebellion among the Dunhuang people, Wang Jiayan consulted with Lin Taiqing and together they issued orders that all the city gates and the gates of the Magistrate's Office be closed immediately and that all soldiers, totalling over 200 men, mount the top of city gate with guns to guard against a peasant rebellion. Their predictions were accurate. As expected, news spread quickly

among the peasant farmers of the oasis. Enraged that Zhang Huming had been killed by Wang Jiayan's troops, about 3,000 peasant farmers launched an attack under heavy fire from the guards. They broke through the city gate of Dunhuang, then besieged the Magistrate's Office. In order to protect Wang Jiayan and his family, Lin Taiqing tried to transfer them from the Magistrate's Office to his Commander's Office. The rebels searched in vain for Wang Jiayan, finding only the body of Zhang Huming. Venting their anger, the rebels destroyed and burnt everything in the Magistrate's Office, and then dispersed. In the course of this uprising, 14 soldiers were killed.

Wang Jiayan's reports about the rebellion were submitted through En Guang to officials in Suzhou and eventually to Viceroy Sheng Yun in Lanzhou. The Viceroy immediately ordered that Wang Jiayan be discharged from his post and that this ex-magistrate and a dozen chief rebels be sent to Suzhou for judicial interrogation. Zhang Naicheng, a petty official from Suzhou, was appointed Magistrate of Dunhuang. Stein heard about the rebellion at Dunhuang while he was in Suzhou. Knowing that no Chinese officials of Dunhuang or elsewhere would pose a threat to his archaeological collections, Stein left them at the Magistrate's Office in Anxi, and set out on his expedition to the mountains on 28 July. On his return to Suzhou on 13 September, Stein saw Wang Jiayan awaiting a formal court of enquiry. Stein left Suzhou on 16 September and returned to Anxi on about 25 September.

Stein stayed at Anxi for 12 days. During this period, he retrieved the 17 cases of antiquities he had deposited at the Magistrate's Office in June. He also dispatched Jiang Xiaowan to travel secretly to the Mogao Grottoes of Dunhuang to negotiate with Wang Yuanlu about buying more manuscripts. Stein mentioned this event in his letter to P.S. Allen:

A proposal for further purchases sent through a trusty messenger met with a promising response, but in order to avoid all suspicions, I had to remain away from the scene & entrust the execution to my ever-zealous secretary. He started off under cover of suitably imagined pretences, while four camels were marched off by the desert route to rendezvous in secret near the caves. A week later, in the dead of night, they turned up again near my temple, ... The 230 bundles of MSS. which the good Tao-shih had been induced to part with, contain approx. close on 3000 text rolls, most Chinese sutras & Tibetan Buddhist works. But no real examination has been possible so far; Central Asian translations are apt to turn up in this big haul. For the present the new acquisitions travel in huge bags, disguised as well as we could manage it. ... For the present we must keep this *entre nous* ... all which the 'Thousand Buddhas' yielded has cost the Govt. only some £130. The single Sanskrit Ms. on palm leaf with a few other 'old things' are worth this.³³

The 230 compact bundles containing close on 3000 text rolls were significantly more than Stein had acquired in May and June and undoubtedly represented a much bigger haul of Dunhuang manuscripts.

Knowing that a long delay would mean many hitches, Stein left Anxi on 8 October 1907 and headed for Hami, in Xinjiang Province. He arrived in Hami on 19 October, and wrote a letter to Viceroy Sheng Yun, an official whom he never met:

In my farewell letter to the Viceroy sent later on from Hami, Chiang made me put in a good word for Wang (Jiayan). I do not know what attention, if any, was paid to it; but before I left Turkestan Chiang heard the cheerful news that Wang had been finally exonerated and given a fresh magisterial charge elsewhere.³⁴

Of the chief rebels of Dunhuang who were tried at Suzhou, four were sentenced to death and four were sentenced to life imprisonment. But the *caimailiang* tax was canceled forever.

Lin Taiqing, who always proclaimed himself a loyal official, committed suicide with poison at Dunhuang when he heard an Imperial Edict announcing Emperor Xuantong's abdication on 12 February 1912. Wang Jiayan transferred from Gansu to Xinjiang after the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 as Director of the Civil Bureau of the Provincial Government, and died of an illness at Urumchi on 1 November 1913. Wang Yuanlu lived a miserable life, apparently haunted by his transactions with Stein, and died at the Mogao Grottoes on 3 June 1931.

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Notes

- 1 The application is dated 14 September 1904; see MS. Stein 294, fol. 85v (Bodleian Library).
- 2 MS. Stein 294, fol. 86 (Bodleian Library).
- 3 Satow was the uncle of Stein's close friend Percy Stafford Allen.
- 4 MS. Stein 283 fol. 6 (Bodleian Library). See Wang Jiqing, 'Sitanyin di er ci Zhongguo kaocha suo chi Zhongguo huzhao jianxi', *Zhongguo bianjiang shidi yanjiu* 1998.4, pp. 69–76. 王冀青:《斯坦因第二次中亚考察所持中国护照简析》,《中国边疆史地研究》1998年第4期,第69–76页。
- 5 M.A. Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay: Personal Narrative of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, London: Macmillan and Co, Limited, 1912, vol. 1, p. 141.
- 6 On Stein's Chinese titles, see Wang Jiqing, 'and', 'Sitanyin di san ci Zhongguo kaocha suo chi Zhongguo huzhao jianxi', *Xiyu yanjiu* 1988.4, pp. 21–30. 王冀青:《斯坦因第三次中亚考察所持中国护照简析》,《西域研究》1998年第4期,第21–30页。
- 7 On the life and career of Jiang Xiaowan (1858–1922), see Wang Jiqing, 'Bu neng bei wangqie de Jiang shiye', *Huasheng guandian* 2002.10 (no. 90), pp. 46–49. 王冀青:《不能被忘却的蒋师爷》,《华声视点》2002年第10期(总第90期),第46–49页。

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- 10 Lü Zhong, pp. 646–647.
- 11 Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, vol. 2, pp. 68–69.
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- 18 Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, vol. 2, p. 165; and Stein, Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China (Oxford, 1921), vol. 2, p. 803.1
- 19 Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, vol. 2, p. 181.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 Stein's diary entry for 27 May 1907 (Bodleian Library, MS.204, p. 315–16).
- 22 Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, vol. 2, p. 191.
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- 25 Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, vol. 2, p. 193; *Serindia*, vol. 2, p. 825.
- 26 Stein's diary entry for 2 June 1907 (Bodleian Library MS.204, p. 327; Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, vol. 2, pp. 232–33.
- 27 Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, vol. 2, pp. 232–33.
- 28 Stein's diary entry for 5 June 1907 (Bodleian Library, MS.204, p. 335).
- 29 Stein's diary entry for 5 June 1907 (Bodleian Library, MS.204, pp. 338–39).
- 30 Stein's diary entries for 7–9 June 1907 (Bodleian Library, MS.204, pp. 340–44).
- 31 Lü Zhong Chongxiu', p. 599.
- 32 Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, vol. 2, p. 21
- 33 Stein's diary entry for 9 June 1907 (Bodleian Library, MS.204, p. 344).
- 34 Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, vol. 2, pp. 336–337. Stein's accounts for 12 June 1907 (Bodleian Library, MS.364, p. 78).
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- 42 Stein, *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, vol. 2, p. 336.
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