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EASTERN TURKESTAN:
THE CHINESE AS RULERS OVER AN ALIEN
RACE

BY
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EASTERN TURKESTAN :

THE CHINESE AS RULERS OVER AN ALIEN RACE

THE CHAIRMAN (Lord Ronaldshay, M.P.), in opening the proceedings, said: We shall have the pleasure this afternoon of hearing a paper by Mr. Macartney. As you are all aware, he is one of those Englishmen who know Central Asia thoroughly well from personal experience. He has been for something like twenty years of his life in that part of Asia of which he is to speak to us—Chinese Turkestan. He is going to describe to us the Chinese as administrators of that dependency. At the present day, when the Chinese are blossoming forth to meet the Western Powers on equal terms, the study Mr. Macartney is to give us, coming from so high an authority, cannot fail to be of the deepest interest.

To a nation like ours, which controls the destiny of a great number of alien races, it should be a matter of special interest to acquaint ourselves with the experience and methods of government of other people whom fortune has placed in a position more or less similar to our own. On or near our Indian border, no less than three great Powers hold sway over indigenous races separated from them by wide gulfs, whether of creed, or of language, or of culture—Russia in Western Turkestan; France in Tongking; and China in Tibet and Eastern Turkestan. To describe the administrative methods of each, and to compare them with our own systems of government, should be a study of no small scientific value. But to only a few men has the opportunity been given to acquire experience wide enough to deal with the subject in its *whole* range. On the other hand, there are many who have some knowledge of particular phases of it; and as one whose lot it has been to spend many years in Eastern Turkestan, naturally that phase which I have observed relates to the Chinese rule

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China has been connected with the country now known as Eastern Turkestan for the last twenty centuries. I shall not weary you with a recital of historical facts, many of which are but ill understood even by the best sinologists of the day. On the other hand, a retrospect of the past, however cursory, is useful if we wish to understand the present; and for this reason I hope you will bear with me if I just touch upon a few of the most prominent features of China's relations with this remote region.

The Chinese have never been an aggressive people. And nowhere is this fact better exemplified than in the process by which they have eventually absorbed Eastern Turkestan—a process which has been a sort of 'pacific penetration.' Whenever the Chinese intervened in this country, not on a single occasion do I believe they did so for purposes of self-aggrandizement. On the contrary, their action was always dictated by some dread of danger on their own border of Kansu, which from the earliest times had been the scene of a fierce and continuous struggle between the barbarian hordes of Central Asia and the peaceful and civilized inhabitants of Inner China. When the Chinese captured Kashgar in 76 B.C., during the Han dynasty, they were acting from motives of self-defence. The Hsung-nu, or the Huns, as we call them, were, by their constant incursions, troubling the Chinese on their north-west border; and as in 76 B.C. Kashgar was in their hands, the expedition against the town was probably undertaken as a part of the policy of the Han Emperors to overcome the Han ascendancy, which seriously menaced the stability of China. For similar reasons of defence, about 600 years afterwards, the Tang Emperors sent expeditions to Central Asia; but at this period their efforts were directed no longer against the raids of the Hsung-nus, or Huns, but against those of the Tu-chueh (Turks) and of the Tufans, or Tibetans, of the Koko Nor region. The Tang dynasty is one of the most illustrious in the Chinese annals, and under its sway, China shone with extraordinary splendour. Victory was achieved over the Tu-chueh and the Tufan tribes, and Turkestan became in A.D. 634 a dependency of China: probably, however, more by the force of her superior civilization, which compelled the respect and submission of the Turkestanians, than by the awe of her military prowess. Be this as it may, there can be no doubt that under the Tangs, Turkestan was effectively ruled by the Chinese, whose suzerainty at this period—the seventh and the

eighth centuries—was acknowledged even in the neighbouring States of Kashmir and of Kokand. It is expected that in connection with China's relations with Kashgaria during the Tang era, the recent archæological discoveries by Dr. M. A. Stein and Professor von Lecoq will throw some much-needed light; but even the few scraps of Chinese MSS. and coins which I myself have secured from the now sand-buried sites near the modern town of Khotan bear witness to the fact that Chinese money was current, that Chinese magisterial seals were used on administrative documents, and that Chinese officials collected the taxes in Turkestan during the Tang period. The native Buddhist Kings were apparently allowed to remain; but there is evidence to show that their administration was controlled by Chinese Imperial Commissioners, residing at their Courts.

After the Tang period the condition of China became very troubled. Through the vista of centuries, we perceive a long line of dynasties, mostly of barbarian origin, springing from regions on the north and west of the Great Wall—the Liaos, the Hsias, the Sung, the Chins, the Yuens, the Mings—who, whilst each in their turn, at their appointed time in history, struggled for mastery in China, had to bow down to her superior culture and became sinicized. Truly can China be compared to a sea, into which all waters flowing become salted. But during all these vicissitudes, the rule which the Tangs in the sixth century established over Turkestan faded out of existence. The country was converted from Buddhism to Islamism in the eleventh century, and it was for a very lengthy period left to its own devices. In 1615 the Roman Catholic friar, Benedict Göes, whilst on his way from India in search of the country called Cathay, which it was not known then was merely another name for China, passed through Kashgaria, then called the country of the Seven Kingdoms; and he has left us some interesting information about the Turkestan people, who, he significantly said, were unwarlike, and could be easily brought under subjection by the Chinese 'if that nation was at all addicted to making conquests.' Although at Benedict Göes' time, the Seven Kingdoms of Turkestan were independent, yet they maintained a certain intercourse with China through what Göes described as *fictæ legationes*—sham embassies. It was in those days a part of China's policy to gain the goodwill of the tribes on her border by preserving a relationship which, whilst it flattered her own *amour propre*, helped to keep the tribes under control by openings for personal profit—a relationship which on China's side was ascribed

as the payment of tribute to a predominant power, but which, from the point of view of the natives, largely partook of the character of periodical trading embassies. These embassies, travelling in large caravans, loaded with the jade of Khotan—a stone which from times immemorial has been famous in China—visited the Imperial Court at stated intervals; and large was the profit which the Seven Kingdoms derived from their despatch. This, I take it, sums up China's relation with Turkestan in the course of the seventeenth century.

Events, however, were soon to occur which brought this region once more under her effective rule. Here, again, we have another illustration of an intervention reluctantly undertaken, and only for the sake of self-defence. In the reign of Kangshi, of the Tsing dynasty—that which now governs China—a great Zungarian chief, Galdan by name, raised his hordes of Eleuths and defied the Chinese so far as to make incursions even to within the Great Wall. The Emperor Kangshi employed alternately diplomacy and force to bring the enemy to a more peaceable frame of mind; but, in spite of temporary successes, all his efforts failed to secure tranquillity for the Chinese border on the Mongolian and the Turkestan sides. The troubles increased during the reign of the next Emperor, Yung-Ching; but Kangshi's grandson, Chien-lung, one of the most illustrious Emperors who ever sat on the Dragon throne, would tolerate the situation no longer. He sent repeated expeditions into Ili and Zungaria, and crushed the powers of the Eleuths on the north side of the Tianshan; but as Turkestan itself was then governed by a Khoja Prince—Burhanudin—in close alliance with the Eleuths, and into whose territory the latter took refuge, Burhanudin's territory was also invaded and captured by Chien-lung's troops. The conquest of the region on the southern side of the Tianshan—that is, Turkestan proper—was effected with remarkable ease, as can be seen from the following details given by the Chinese General Chao-hui, in a report which he made to the Emperor on his entry into Kashgar. 'The inhabitants,' he said, 'surrendered to us without resistance and with every demonstration of joy, which was a sign that they ask for nothing better than to live under the laws of Your Majesty. They came before us bringing refreshment, which I accepted, and caused to be distributed amongst the soldiers, whilst giving, in all cases, to those who brought presents of food, small pieces of silver, not under the name of payment, but rather as a reward.'

Thus, however troublesome the Eleuths on the north of the

Tian-shan might have been to the Chinese, the Turkestanians on the south of the same range made their submission almost without a single blow having been struck—a remarkable confirmation of Gōes' words, written a century and a half previously, that the Turkestanians were unwarlike. The Chinese régime, which had been non-existent since the later Tang period—that is, for about ten centuries—was accordingly re-established in Turkestan; and thence onwards up to the present time China has maintained her control over the country—with sundry interruptions, however; some of them serious enough to overthrow her rule for short intervals.

The thorn in China's side was one, not of indigenous, but of exotic, growth. The Kokandian Kings beyond her border, on the western side of the Tian-shan, enjoyed a prescriptive right to the collection in Kashgar of certain trade dues—a right which was admitted by China. They had also arrogated to themselves the position of spiritual leaders of the Kashgarians, and certainly exercised unbounded influence in the Chinese dominion, east of Tian-shan. On the establishment of the new Government in Kashgaria, the old Khoja Royal Family—the same which ruled over the country prior to its subjugation by Chien-lung—found a ready asylum in the Kokand Khanate, and, under the instigation of the Kokandians, Khoja pretenders, actively assisted by their friends with soldiers and treasure, made frequent efforts to get their former subjects to rise and to expel the infidel Chinese. Thus it was that booty-loving fanatics, partly from the warlike Kirghiz nomads of the Tian-shan Mountains and partly from Osh and Margillan—towns now situated in the Russian province of Ferghana—were ever on the alert to surprise Kashgar, and by working on the religious feelings of the Kashgarians, they actually caused them to revolt in 1827, 1829, 1846, and 1857. But cowardice and half-heartedness had ever been the characteristics of the people of the Seven Kingdoms; and so, if they rose at all, they made their rebellions without conviction, knowing in advance that their efforts were condemned to a failure which they never received with disappointment, but greeted rather with a secret sense of relief; for none remembered better than themselves the tyranny of former days when they were under their own rulers.

I need not dilate on the last rebellion—that which subverted the Chinese power in Central Asia from the year 1863 to 1877—these events having occurred within the memory of most of us present this evening. Suffice it to recall that the revolt did not originate in Eastern Turkestan, but was the reaction of what took place in

China Proper. In 1850 the Tai-ping insurrection broke out, and was followed in 1862 by the rising of the Tungan Mohammedans in the Province of Kansu. At that time the Chinese troops in Kashgaria were largely recruited from the Tunganis, and, as may well be imagined, these soon joined their co-religionists in Kansu. The result was that the Chinese in Turkestan, with their retreat cut off to the inner provinces, were massacred without mercy. The Tunganis in Turkestan, however, profited nothing by this discomfiture of their late rulers, for in the general disorder a member of the old Kashgarian Khoja family, Buzurg Khan, who had been a refugee in Kokand, was brought back to Kashgar and set on the throne. He was soon deposed by his General, Mohamad Yakub Beg, a Kokandi soldier of fortune, who, as many of us can still remember, established himself as the Amir of Turkestan in 1867, and maintained a hold over the country until the Chinese, having quelled the Tungan rebellion within China Proper, subdued the Tunganis on the north of the Tian-shan range, and retook the entire province from which they had been expelled for fourteen years.

The reoccupation took place in 1877, and since then the Chinese have remained in undisturbed possession.

The administration, as it is now carried on by the Chinese, differs in some essential points from that which they established previously. From the days of Chien-lung up to the time of the last Tungan rebellion Turkestan, was looked upon in Peking as an outlying dependency—not as an integral part of the Empire—and was given a special form of Government. The officials were not Chinese, as they now are, but invariably Manchus. The supreme authority was vested in an Imperial Commissioner, or Chin-chai, at Ili, who had the direct charge of the country north of the Tian-shan, whilst the Government at the south of that range—that is, in the Lob Basin, or Turkestan proper—was confided to a Deputy Governor, with headquarters at Yarkand. The Imperial troops were not Chinamen, but recruits from the Manchu Banners, and, as I have already pointed out, from the Tungan Mohammedans of the neighbouring Province of Kansu. Administrative posts of importance were also given to the natives of the country. The collection of the revenues, the administration of justice amongst the non-Chinese element, the levy of custom dues on the frontiers and in the towns, were all left to native Hakim Beks, who, in their rôle of district magistrates, were very grand personages, and enjoyed no small degree of pomp and circumstance.

But under the present régime, there has been a general tightening-

up from Peking of the administrative links. China's possessions on the north and the south sides of the Tian-shan—no more called by the vague term of Si-yu, or Western region—have been named afresh as Sin-Chiang, or New Dominion; and, instead of the country being treated as a colony, it has been formed into a province of the Empire, on the same footing as the eighteen provinces in China Proper, and with a local administration organized on an identical basis. The seat of Government is established at Urumtchi, made the capital of the province in 1878, and the headquarters of the Futai, or the Governor. Forming a Council with, but in subordination to, this high functionary are the usual Pu-chen-ssu, or Provincial Treasurer, the Ngan-cha-ssu, or Provincial Judge, the Hsio-tai, or Commissioner of Education, and the Titai, or Provincial Commander-in-Chief. For local administrative purposes, the province is divided off into four circuits, each in charge of a Taotai, whose position resembles somewhat that of a Commissioner in India. The Taotai's circuit is again parcelled off into districts—some forty in number for the entire province—in charge of each of which are officials of various grades, just as in China Proper, some styled Chih-fu, others Chih-chou, and others again Chih-hsien, all practically independent of each other, but all subjected to the supervision of the Taotai, who forms the intermediary of communication between the higher authorities at the provincial capital and the lower ones in district charge. As in India, so in Turkestan, the district is the unit of administration; and the duties of a Chinese district officer appear to be just as various as those of an Indian Deputy Commissioner. He is responsible for the general tranquillity of his charge—is the judge, in the first instance, in civil and criminal matters, the collector of the revenue, the governor of the jail, the registrar of the land transfers, the coroner; in fact, there is scarcely anything connected with the district in which the Amban, as this many-sided official is called by the natives, is not expected to take some interest; and truly he is given an ample opportunity to act up to the Chinese idea that a district officer is the father and mother of his people. The administration of the sub-districts is entirely entrusted to the native Begs—or Tahsildars, as we would call them in India—nominated by, and holding their post at the pleasure of, the Amban. The Begs are petty judges in their way, as well as tax-collectors for the Amban, and having under their order a number of yuzbashis, or men in charge of one hundred families; mirabs, or distributors of irrigation water; dizikchis, or night-watchmen.

Such, then, in outline, is the system of government in Turkestan. It has a certain co-ordination, and in theory there is no reason why it should not work well, but in practice it is vitiated by a good deal of oppression—not more, however, than what the native population can cheerfully put up with. There is no blinking the fact that the taxes of a district are simply farmed out to the Amban; but considering the almost irresistible temptation to extort to which the system makes him liable, it must be confessed that he generally behaves with remarkable moderation. It is, or rather it was a few years ago, the fashion in Europe to look upon the Chinese mandarin as a monster of rapacity. Certainly it is easy to condemn, but it requires latitude of mind, as well as kindness, to appreciate and understand him. For my own part, the more I have come in contact with Chinamen of the official class, the more I think that the virtues they possess are their own, and their faults, those of the system under which they work. By system I here refer specially to the mode of recruitment of the Civil Service in Turkestan. I cannot accurately say how many Civil Service appointments of the higher grades there are in this province—some 200 perhaps; and so for the actual needs of the civil administration some 200 men would be sufficient. But what do we find? We find a whole army of office-seekers who have paid, by way of investment, large sums of money to the Government in the purchase of brevet ranks. Of course it is only fair that these men should be allowed a return on their outlay, and so the pernicious system has sprung up of permitting an official who happens to be in the occupation of a post to remain in it for a short time only—however well he may be fitted for a prolonged tenure—so that some other expectant of office may be given a chance of appropriating its flesh-pots. The tendency is what might have been anticipated—haste to make a fortune whilst in office; indifference to local problems; and in the case of foreign pressure, concessions often unwisely made; all because of the desire to be left undisturbed to one's private finances. At the same time it is only fair to say that really worthless officials are quite the exception, in spite of the drawbacks of the system, which, after all, is perhaps not much worse than our own was in India in the days before the Mutiny. Quite a large proportion of mandarins in Turkestan do strive to rule equitably and in a manner most conducive to the welfare of the natives. No doubt there is a good deal of what we would call venality and corruption; but it is too often forgotten that officials are practically the unpaid agents of the Government who employ

them, and that unless they supplement their ridiculously small emoluments by commissions and the like, it is a moral impossibility for them—I will not say to maintain themselves, for they certainly cannot do that—but even to pay the salary of the staff which they keep at their personal expense. The absurdity of the situation is manifest when I say that the regulation pay of a district magistrate in China is 200 taels per annum, equal to some £40 of our money.

But you may ask, What, after all, is the net result of the Chinese rule over the natives of Turkestan?

I think we may recognize that this rule has, on the whole, been a successful one. At the same time, it is only just to premise that the task of the Chinese has been vastly facilitated by two factors—independent of the Chinese themselves—the one being the natural docility of the governed race, and the other, the suppression of the disturbing influence of Kokand by the Russian annexation of that Khanate.

The historical review which I have already given will serve to illustrate these two points.

In the first place, what is the character of the native Moham-medans of Eastern Turkestan? All who have written about this people are unanimous in describing them as good-humoured but unenterprising, and even cowardly. Their unwarlikeness was remarked upon by Benedict Gœs in 1615; and Chiun-lung's General, Chao-Hui, who captured Kashgar in 1759, tells us of the singular ease with which his victory was achieved.

But to come to modern times. The most recent book I have seen on Chinese Turkestan is, I believe, Professor Ellsworth Huntington's 'Pulse of Asia,' published a couple of years ago. The following extract will show what impression the native character has made on this highly scientific explorer:

'I have made a list of the qualities of the Chantos (natives) which most impressed me, and which I find most frequently mentioned in the writings of others. Among the good qualities, the chief are gentleness, good temper, hospitality, courtesy, patience, contentment, democracy, religious tolerance, and industry. Among the bad are timidity, dishonesty, stupidity, provincialism, childishness, lack of initiative, lack of curiosity, indifference to the suffering of others, and immorality. It is noticeable that strong characteristics, whether good or bad, are absent. Determination, courage, aggressiveness, insolence, violence, fanaticism, and the like, are almost unknown among the Chantos.'

This description is, I think, very fair, and I can endorse almost every word of Professor Huntington.

But you may say that, if the Turkestanis are as mediocre as they have been painted, how is it that the Chinese rule over them was overthrown on several occasions in the nineteenth century?

Now, if we look into the matter carefully, we shall find that the rôle played by the native Turkestanians in all these revolutions had always been a most insignificant one. It was the Kokandians from over the border who unceasingly defied and undermined the Chinese authority, and agitated, for their own benefit, the re-establishment of the old Khoja régime; and as for the Kashgarians, if they rose at all, they did so, not from any sense of ambition or of conviction, but merely to save their face before their co-religionists. Nor did these people depart from their habitual passive attitude during the last great rebellion which overthrew the Chinese power in Turkestan from 1862 to 1877. In this case the troubles did not originate from the usual quarter—that is, Kokand—but from a totally new direction—the Chinese Tungani Mohammedans, a race with whom the Kashgarians never had any sympathy. And when the Chinese quelled the Tungani rebellion in 1876, and their General, Tso-Tsung-Tang, was marching on Kashgar, what was the attitude of the natives? See what Sir Francis Younghusband, who travelled through the country when the embers of the conflagration had only just died down, writes on the subject in his ‘In the Heart of a Continent’: ‘On hearing that the Chinese were close to the town, the natives hastily threw aside their uniforms or disguises as soldiers, and, assuming the dresses as cultivators, walked about the fields in a lamb-like and innocent manner. The Chinese entered the town, and everything went on as if nothing had happened. The shopkeeper sold his wares, the countryman ploughed his fields, totally indifferent as to who was or who was not in power.’

Now I think I have brought forward sufficient evidence in support of my first point—namely, that the natives of Turkestan are essentially a docile and easily managed people—and there can be no question that the task of the Chinese administration has been correspondingly alleviated.

But China has also been benefited by a condition of things created by her neighbour on her northern and western border—I mean Russia. The cause of all China’s woes in Turkestan was centred on the Khanate of Kokand, whose influence and intrigues were so much feared by the Chinese that the latter, in order to

purchase the goodwill of the Kokandians, used to pay them a yearly subsidy equal to £3,500 of our money. Kokand was taken by the Russians in 1876, and, with the loss by the State of its independence, the Chinese were well rid of a troublesome and fanatical element on their border. Of course, it might be argued that the Chinese gained nothing by the substitution of Russia for Kokand. Be this as it may, one thing is beyond question—and it is, since the incorporation of Kokand into the Russian Empire, the peace of Kashgar has remained undisturbed, and that for a period of over thirty years. It is true that at certain times the shadow cast by the Northern Colossus over Chinese Turkestan was ominously large. But when we bear in mind what strong cards Russia had in her hands, what political use she might have made of all the shadowy rights of Kokand to which she succeeded, how geographically and militarily the country was at Russia's mercy—well, I won't say that she has behaved with conspicuous moderation, but I will say that she might have gone a good deal farther than she did.

Still, however much China's administrative task may have been lightened by the two factors to which I have alluded—namely, the natural docility of the native Kashgarian and the suppression of Kokandi intrigues, it would be a gross injustice to her to suppose that these form anything like the foundation of her strength. This strength rests on far more substantial ground—no less than the good-will of the governed—good-will in return for benefits received.

Eastern Turkestan has, under the Chinese rule, enjoyed the blessings of peace for over thirty years, and there can be no doubt that in the interval, the country has advanced considerably in prosperity. I do not say that the Chinese by extraordinary activity have contributed to this result; but I do say that indirectly, by giving the country what it most needed—repose and order—they have created a condition of things wherein the people have had a better opportunity than they ever enjoyed before to work out their own salvation. The 7,000 or 8,000 troops which the Chinese maintain at different centres in the Sin-Chiang Province still on the old-fashion model are, of course, hopelessly ineffective to meet a foreign invasion, but they serve the purpose for which all Chinese provincial armies are created—to cope with what may be called the normal incidents of local life: repression of bandits, petty disturbances, fiscal riots. And with the establishment of an orderly Government, the people have been freed from the grosser sort of oppression. Property is fairly secure; much waste land has been reclaimed by the construction of numerous irrigation canals; the

population has been on the increase ; the standard of comfort has risen ; trade has progressed, and with the accumulation of wealth in the country, the purchasing power of the natives for foreign goods has grown—a condition of things which is reacting favourably on the trade with India, but in a more marked degree with Russia, the value of which has, at least, trebled within the last twenty-five years.

It may be thought by some that even to have produced these results, superficial as they be, the Chinese authorities must have been gifted with a rare political insight, when it is considered that the race they are governing is not a kindred, but an alien one. No doubt some credit is due to the Chinese ; at the same time, it would be wrong, I think, to suppose that they have ever been placed in Turkestan face to face with a native problem of such complexity as would require them to approach it from an angle of vision other than that which they ordinarily take in relation to affairs in their own country. In the first place, both parties are Orientals, and as such they have much in common in their ideas of government ; and in the second, China, by her ancient civilization and her individuality, which she has preserved through all changes, does compel the respect and the submission of a race as simple as the Turkestanis, just in the same way as, in bygone ages, by these very factors, she exercised an overwhelming influence on the Mongols and the Manchus. Thus the Chinese entered into possession in Turkestan with a moral equipment of a superior order, and yet of an order not incomprehensible to their Mohammedan subjects ; and they readily saw that their methods of administration—those which have been employed from times immemorial in the inner provinces, might be transferred to this outlying region. The guiding principles are therefore much the same here in Turkestan as they are in China Proper. Those which have struck me most during my sojourn in Kashgar may be summed up under the four following heads :

1. Toleration.
2. Control of the mass by winning over the gentry.
3. Personal responsibility on the part of the officials for all breaches of the peace in their jurisdiction.
4. Prestige, founded on the preservation in its fulness of Chinese individuality in an alien environment.

Perhaps you will bear with me if I enlarge somewhat on these points. It is a paradox, but it seems to me none the less true, that in her very laxity and *laissez-faire* lies one of the secrets of China's

power in this Mohammedan country; for the Chinese thoroughly appreciate the spirit of the French saying, 'Trop de zèle, beaucoup de bêtises,' in meddling with the social system of an alien race. The consequence is, given certain general principles, no attempt is ever made to interfere with or to disorganize native institutions, or to subject the population to those vexatious restraints which are often imposed by legislation aiming at making people happy in spite of themselves. Administer as little as possible is the golden rule of the Chinese. On the other hand, the Chinese theory of Government, and especially of the limits of its power, corresponds fairly well with that commonly accepted by Mohammedans. The Government is there to collect the taxes, to watch over the public security, and to punish crime; but it has little to do with civil matters, which in China Proper are left to merchant guilds, or to village elders, or to the arbitration of friends; and in Turkestan we find the Chinese following the parallel system of relegating all such, when they involve no question clashing with their own prerogatives, to the Shariat—that is, the Mohammedan religious Court. But in order that the power of the Kazis, Muftis, etc.—who constitute the Shariat—may be kept within due bounds, their nomination, which is made by the people, has to receive the ratification of the local Chinese district official, who reserves to himself an unfettered discretion to remove any Mohammedan judge shown to be unworthy of the post. The whole system is remarkably tolerant, but not ill-balanced, and does, as a matter of fact, avert conflicts between the rights of the rulers and those based on the religion of the ruled.

My second point is that the Chinese idea of government, democratic as it is, is not, as it is with us in Europe, from the lower stratum of society to the upper, but from the upper to the lower; and this idea is in special evidence in Turkestan, where Chinese officials rarely come in contact with the common people, and still more rarely affect to understand their needs. Does the Amban care for the good opinion of what we would call the man in the street? I should say not. Government, in his view, is not an institution for the elevation of society, but an organization simply for the maintenance of public order; and he is philosopher enough to comprehend that order is seldom troubled by the lower classes, who are dumb even under oppression, if they be without a leader. It therefore serves no useful purpose for the official to gain the favour of the flock, but it behoves him to ingratiate himself with the shepherd. The Chinese administration, consequently, deals with important native personages; and so long as these are

content, all is well, even if the rank and file be left somewhat to their oppression. This view of things is in striking contrast to our own methods in India, where an attempt at least is made to safeguard the rights and privileges even of the humblest of the community. And yet, taking the Chinese administration as we find it—one without the slightest altruistic aims—we cannot but admire the practical character, if not the callousness, of its method, which, after all, has some points of resemblance with that successfully followed by the Romans of old in their Provincial Governments. Needless to say that under such a system nothing is done to raise the moral level of the masses by what we would call education.

The third principle which all Chinese officials in district charge are expected to bear in mind is that they are held personally responsible for any insurrection or discontent sufficiently pronounced to disturb the serenity of the atmosphere in the higher Yamens. The grain-tax—the only one which really weighs on the people and likely to cause friction—must be gathered in judiciously; and by ‘judiciously’ a scrupulous adherence to the regulations is not meant; for the scale of taxation, as fixed by law, framed a long time ago, and on no account to be changed so long as the present dynasty lasts, is absurdly low; but circumspection is implied, that the patience of the people must not be tried beyond endurance. In practice it has been found that a grain-tax amounting to about 25 per cent. of the crop may be levied without manifestations of discontent, and most district officials keep within this safe limit. But I well remember that once an acquaintance of mine went up to seven times the official rate, with the result, however, that he had to disgorge, and had to be recommended a change of air.

But even under the best of governments, popular disturbances will happen, sometimes caused by the faults of individual officials, and sometimes produced by events quite beyond their control. To the honour of the Chinese administration, be it said, that seldom is any attempt made to uphold a really undeserving official—he is disgraced or cashiered, or even cast into prison. The procedure, however, with regard to the other case—that is, when a disturbance takes place under circumstances for which we, at least, would not hold the official on the spot responsible—is rather anomalous according to our notions. With us, when a district is disturbed, the first consideration is to uphold authority—to send troops, if need be, to the scene. Not so with the Chinese. Force is seldom resorted to, for the simple reason that they have very

little force behind them. The first step is, *per fas et nefas*, to fix the blame on the district officer and to remove him. *He* was responsible for the tranquillity of his charge, and because there had been an outbreak, *he* had, *ipso facto*, shown himself incapable or undiplomatic. The situation calls for a scapegoat, and the sacrifice of the local official is made, in order to soothe the mob, and to bring them to a more tractable frame of mind. The next step is for the higher authorities to draw in the reins by holding an inquiry, not necessarily at the local Yamen, but preferably at their own, usually some distance from the scene of disturbance. The ringleaders are asked to attend ostensibly as witnesses; but in nine cases out of ten they end up by being converted into criminals and given a severe punishment, always on the unimpeachable ground of having made a row, instead of representing their grievances to the higher authorities.

The face of the Government having been thus saved, a fresh *modus vivendi* is arrived at by mutual concessions. Order is re-established, and so far as the disturbed district is concerned, the matter is at an end. But what of the official? Is he to be altogether sacrificed? Vicariously, he must bear the brunt of the situation, even if the fault lay not with him, but with his superiors whose mandates he was carrying out. But in practice a sense of justice prevails in the long run; the sacrificed official is given a chance to clear himself, and often compensation by a transfer or even a promotion to some other charge. Underlying the whole system, two settled rules of action—both highly opportunist—may be detected. The one is that, whatever disturbance occurs, the Provincial Government, as a whole, must never be compromised, and that, out of every *débâcle*, its reputation for benevolent intentions towards the population must emerge immaculate. And the other rule is that the district official may govern or misgovern as much as he pleases, subject, however, to the acquiescence of the people, who are his natural checks, and have a perfect right to clamour and to make their grievances known at headquarters. Frequently have I seen officials getting themselves into serious trouble, not because they have been more rapacious than others, but simply because they happen to have found themselves in a district where the population are more than usually intriguing or tenacious of their rights. How often, too, have I seen native deputations travelling to Kashgar to lay their complaints before the Taotai; and how often also have I heard of threatened district officials, fearing the consequences, ignominiously sending out

agents to waylay the deputies and to bring them back, if possible, by blandishments or threats.

The fourth principle I seem to discern in the administration is, that a Chinese official must preserve intact, in his foreign surroundings, his national individuality. Tolerant as he is towards those he governs, he exacts tolerance in return, and a strict compliance with Chinese customs and formalities in the conduct of business in the Yamen. His legal procedure is a simple replica of that current in China Proper; and native Mohammedans in a trial are subjected to the humiliation of going down on their knees and of uncovering their heads, just in the same manner as Chinamen would be, under similar circumstances, in their own country. On principle, the Amban speak no language but Chinese in Court, communicating with the parties through an interpreter. He never relaxes into familiarity with the natives, always treating them with the air of a grand *seigneur*, and maintaining a dignified, but a kindly, attitude of isolation, which stamps him as a man of quality and culture. Thus it is that, despite his peccadillos and jugglery of administration—which, be it said, do not necessarily shock the native mind—he remains an imposing personage in his foreign surroundings.

Such, then, are some of the principles of the Chinese administration in Turkestan; and on the whole I think they have been successfully applied, if a fair measure of native contentment may be taken as a criterion. It would be idle to ask if the Chinese, as such, are popular with the Mohammedan race they govern. We might just as well ask if we Britishers are personally liked by the races of India. But both the Chinese and we have a common basis for our strength, in that the natives of Turkestan, as well as those of India, recognize that the foreigners have been able to establish forms of government more righteous and more tolerant than any which they themselves, with all their clashing interests, could ever have evolved. And as for the Turkestanis, I firmly believe that were it possible to take their suffrage to-morrow, putting the Chinese on the one side, and the old Khoja royal family on the other, they would unhesitatingly prefer the foreigner, under whom they have always enjoyed a reasonable security of person and property, to their own people, under whom these blessings have been conspicuous only by their absence. To sum up, the Chinese administration in Eastern Turkestan is mild and humane—more supple than firm; and in spite of its corruption, seems to satisfy the natives of the country for the present; although it must be said that under pan-Islamic influences, there are already

vague indications of an awakening amongst them—awakening which sooner or later will have to be taken into account by the governing race. At the same time, you will agree that the Chinese administration—apart from its feature of tolerance—presents nothing for imitation by us, as rulers of Asiatics, who have already been taught by us to share in the responsibility of government, and to expect from those in authority something more than the elementary function of policing and taxing a country.

DISCUSSION

Dr. A. M. STEIN: After the truly admirable survey of the political and social condition in Chinese Turkestan we have had, I feel some hesitation in responding to the call from the chair to speak. I came here absolutely convinced that anything Mr. Macartney would tell us about the political conditions in Turkestan and about the rule of the Chinese would be, as it were, the last word that could be heard on the subject. There can be no one in this country, or indeed in any country of Europe, who has studied Chinese rule in Turkestan longer or with a keener eye than he has done. I have had the good fortune to travel far in this dependency of China, and I have not been in any part of this extensive territory without hearing the same thing—that if any Sahib knew anything of the country it was Macartney Sahib. It has been a special piece of good fortune for the Indian Government and the British Empire that our interests have been represented there for something like twenty years by so admirable a judge of men as Mr. Macartney, and one so exceptionally qualified not only to understand the facts, but also to grasp the ideas, and sympathize with those with whom he is brought into contact. The opinion I have just expressed is held not by the Chinese officials alone, but also by the Begg, or native subordinate officials, and the people in all parts where Mr. Macartney has travelled.

There are only one or two points in the survey we have heard on which I would like to say a few words. I am glad to note that the lecturer recognizes the slow but steady improvement which I believe is taking place in the country. Going back as I did three years ago, after an absence of nearly six years from the country, it was to me a most striking fact that the Administration was trying to develop the economic resources of the land, and the officials realized more than they did before that, after all, it was to the advantage of the rulers themselves, not only to maintain security and peace—an elementary duty they have steadfastly discharged—but to encourage an extension of cultivation. Coming back by way of the oasis of Kelpin, it was a great pleasure to me to note that extensive tracts had been regained from the desert. This has, no doubt, been the work of the cultivators, and not of the Chinese officials. But the work is to some extent speculative, and the landowners would not have entered upon a task

not immediately productive if they did not know that the colonists in the new tracts would be well treated. The work, you must remember, involved what is for those regions extensive irrigation. That they have been treated fairly well is proved from the fact that this enterprise continues steadily, and it is advantageous not only to the big landowners, but also to the actual occupants of the new lands.

With regard to the character of the Turkestanis, I think we might have a very long discussion if we went into an historical retrospect bearing on the causes contributing to their characteristics. What they are is largely the result of a long history, in which a part was played by different nations and peoples. They have been described as indifferent, slow, wanting in enterprise, and so on. I believe that one of the chief reasons for these traits is to be found in what is, after all, perhaps, a fortunate circumstance. Turkestan is under-populated, and it has been under-populated for a very long period. There is no pressure of competition driving the people into hard exertions, such as we find not only in Europe, but in many parts of India, where the population tends to exceed the capacity of the soil to maintain it. I am not saying whether under-population is a good thing or a bad thing; I am only calling attention to its existence as explaining the absence of an enterprising spirit, and to show that this lack need not surprise us when we think of the country as one where a living can be made without much exertion. Whether that is pleasant or not, I leave to be decided according to the principles of those who judge their fellow-creatures either by their economic condition, or by their intentions, or by their moral standards.

Another point on which I wish to speak is that corruption is practised, so far as I have observed, by the native Begs more than by the Chinese officials. These Begs belong to families which have always exercised influence and secured posts. The money they make, after all, is not drained away. It remains in the country, and goes back to the population in the purchase of food and other necessaries. This applies in some degree to the gratifications taken by the Ambans. The amount 'drained' into China Proper is by no means large. The bulk of the money passes into the hands of the local traders and the more enterprising classes. As regards the administration of justice, I am not qualified to express any special opinions; but I do feel one thing—that the country is blessed in the absence of pleaders. (Laughter and cheers.) If the Chinese official keeps the money of the man he favours, and returns the bribe of the other side, the amount that passes is very small compared with the enormous takings in India of the lawyers and pleaders, whose sentiments and feelings are no more understood by the people at large than are those of the Chinese officials in Turkestan.

As to State education, it is conspicuous by its absence. Whether the Chinese are not quite right to leave the attainment of their literature and art to the unaided efforts of the people is a matter I will not here discuss. But it is noteworthy that the people, unaided by the State, do secure genuine elements of education. I read in a well-known book, of shepherds in a certain tract as being half savages. Well, I visited those shepherds, and found they were quite as civilized as the shepherds—say, in Central Europe or Eastern Europe, possibly as those in certain parts of the Highlands. (Laughter.) I found that these men had been at school in a distant town, and had obtained some elementary knowledge. The fact of each man having sat at the feet of a strict master as a boy for two or three years had a very good disciplinary effect, and it had the advantage that it did not spoil him for the kind of life he was destined to lead. (Hear, hear.) We cannot say that education has always succeeded in that respect in other countries.

The Central Asian Society is to be congratulated upon having heard from a most competent judge of Eastern Turkestan such a comprehensive survey of its political condition. The publication of the lecture will soon, I hope, follow, for the accessibility of this paper will be of service to all those who are working at Central Asian problems, and it will illustrate once more how much that is ancient survives to this day in Turkestan. (Cheers.)

Mr. E. DELMAR MORGAN said that he was in Turkestan in 1880, thanks to the kindness of the Russian authorities, who allowed him to travel alone. In those days, more than these, it was a difficult thing to get into the country, and he was fortunate in being there when relations between Russia and China were strained. The Russians were marching on the Chinese capital in those regions, but the negotiations ended in a pacific solution of the dispute. A strong force of cavalry and infantry was on the march up the valley of one of the principal feeders of the River Ela. He there met great generals and officers of the Russian army, including General Kaufmann and General Kuropatkin. The Mongols who accompanied him as servants were good fellows, but they could not exchange observations, excepting that one of them spoke a few words of Russian, and he was therefore able to understand him a little. They were typical Mongols, riding their horses as if they had been almost born in the saddle. Since then the country had been explored by distinguished travellers, Dr. Stein amongst them, and much light had been thrown upon its storied past. He was himself much impressed by visiting the graveyards of the Nestorian Christians, who seemed to have entered the country from the West. They perished in the Islamic invasion, and Christianity was swept back. The Moslem faith was carried on and on, and spread

to most parts of China. He thought this fact had something to do with the Tai-ping rebellion which broke out so many years ago, and which was put down in great measure by General Gordon. He believed one of the best books they had on Chinese Turkestan was written by an American traveller, Mr. Huntingdon. He was of opinion that a great future awaited this interesting country, particularly by the adoption of irrigation on a large scale. Much had been done in this way in Russian Turkestan, and this example could be followed in the Chinese dependency, where the land would be suitable for the growth of cotton and other things.

The CHAIRMAN proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Macartney for his paper on a subject on which he might be said to be the highest living authority.

The vote was carried with acclamation, and the proceedings terminated.

