

LIU CH'ENG (WILLOW CITY).

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Liu ch'eng, or, as the name is also written, *Lu-chen* or *Liu-chen*, is the same as the country of *Liu chung* (in the middle of willows) at the time of the Han dynasty, where the Chinese governor of the *Si yü* had established his residence.⁹⁵⁰ In the T'ang period it was the district *Liu chung hien*. The distance between Liu ch'eng and *Huo chou* (see the next) in the west is 70 *li*. Hami lies 1000 *li* east of Liu ch'eng.⁹⁵¹ A great river passes through the country (it seems between Hami and Liu ch'eng). Many bones (of men and beasts of burden) are met with on this road. People say that there are evil spirits who deceive the travellers, making them lose their companions and thus cause their death. After leaving the great river, the traveller has to cross the *Liu sha*.⁹⁵² At the foot of a *Fire mountain* (v. p. 190) there is an isolated city two or three *li* wide; that is Liu ch'eng. There are fields, gardens, shady trees, flowing waters all around. The soil produces millet, wheat, beans, hemp; there grow also peaches, pears, jujubes, melons, bottle-gourds. There are also plenty of grapes, of small size, but very sweet and without seeds. They are called *so tsz' p'u t'ao* (small grapes).⁹⁵³ As to domestic animals, there are cattle, sheep, horses, and camels. The climate there is pleasant. The people are of good character. The men tie up their hair; the women cover themselves with black stuffs. The language they speak is that of the *Wei-wu-rh* (Uigurs).

In 1406 emperor Yung lo sent his minister *Liu t'ie-mu-rh* to *Bie-shi-ba-li* (Bishbaligh; see farther on), and

⁹⁵⁰ We read in the *Hou Han shu*, chap. cxviii., article *Si yü* (Western countries), that A.D. 123 *Pan Yung* was entrusted with the affairs concerning western countries and established his residence at Liu chung.

⁹⁵¹ According to modern Chinese itineraries, these distances are respectively 50 and 1030 *li*.

⁹⁵² The desert *Liu sha*, literally, "moving sand." See note 884.

⁹⁵³ This is still the Chinese name for the small sun-dried grapes (currants) imported to Peking from Hami.

ordered him to bestow on the ruler of *Liu ch'eng*, when passing through his city, some pieces of silk. Then in the next year the ruler of Liu ch'eng despatched *Wa-ch'i-la*, one of his captains of a thousand, with tribute to the Chinese court. In 1409, when *An* (an envoy who had been sent to Samarkand) returned from the west, the ruler of Liu ch'eng sent again an envoy, who accompanied An. He presented tribute, and was rewarded by the emperor. In 1413 the ruler of Liu ch'eng sent an envoy, who accompanied *Bo-a-rh-hin-t'ai* (an envoy from *Huo chou*), and in the winter of the same year the captain of a thousand *Kuang-yin-nu* was again despatched to the Chinese court. In 1422 Liu ch'eng together with Hami sent an envoy and presented its tribute, consisting of 2000 sheep. In 1430 the ruler of Liu ch'eng sent one of his chieftains, *A-hei ba-shi*, to the Chinese court. Envoys from Liu ch'eng arrived also in 1440 and 1448. Subsequently, when *T'u-lu-fan* (Turfan) had become powerful, Liu ch'eng was annexed to it.