hsi 河西 district into the north of the Desert. Four counties, Chang-yi 張掖, Ch'iu-chuan 酒泉, Tun-huan 敦煌 and Wu-wei 武威, were set in that district to clear the way to the western countries and protect it against the invading Hsiong-nu. In 1930 a lot of wood-plate archives were found in Ohu-yen, a military base at the front. They are called Chu-yen Archives.

In this article I would like to investigate into the functions and duties of the hou-kuan, which has hardly been studied until now, by using a series of archives found in the grave of Chia-chu-hou-kuan 甲導解官. I will call them 'Yi-kuan Pu' for the present. After investigating them I came to the conclusion as follows: Hou-kuan is a mediator between Tuwei-fu 都威府, the headquarters and hou-tu 候隊, a force at the front. He command the hou-tu, delivers the order of Tu-wei-fu to the hou-tu. and on the other hand, tells the condition of the front lines to Tu-weifu; Putting the duties into practice he often calls a meeting to make the order thoroughly understood: He inspects the reports presented by the hou-tu strictly, keeps a close check on the violation and negligence of the officials and soldiers; Hou-tu does all the office works about them: In addition to the delivery of the provisions, he takes charge of the military fund sent from the inner counties, and buys the requisites for the hou-tu: We must pay special attention to it that hou-kuan takes a leading part in the public and private economic life in that district.

印刷所	発行人	史	一九七二三年 年
中村村	京都市左京 中 中	林	九月一日祭八月二五日日
印質	等長 佐 等 体 振	(第五六巻第五号)	日日印
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