

The rainfall thus decreased on account of the configuration of the ground. Only in small quantities does the moisture of the sea-winds reach the interior. The law that, roughly speaking, may be stated for the whole continent is that the sea-winds rise in the peripheral parts and drop their moisture on border mountains and in the plateau country. For this reason there was also considerably more rainfall at camp VIII than at Ghashun-nor.

As a result of his researches, Dr HAUDE hoped to find out whether something might not be done for the cultivation of the soil here, and whether afforestation might be carried out. In this case the country would rise enormously in value. It is, however, also possible that the Mongolian steppe is so intimately conditioned by the climate that it is not to be tamed.

Another problem to whose solution we hoped to be able to make important contributions was the problem of dessication, or Inner Asia's undoubted progression towards a dry period. That such is the case is evident from the fact that nearly all the lakes are sinking and becoming smaller.

Furthermore, Dr HAUDE made very accurate and fine observations of the insolation and the nightly radiation. The layering of the air over the surface of the earth at night was also made the object of his studies. Such series of observations he had carried out in Pao-t'ou during the six weeks when the staff were waiting for me to join them. He kept up the observations, not only in camp, but also on the march.

The altitude of our camp, as has already been mentioned, was 1595 meters. We were thus living in a dry, sunny and healthy mountain climate, that was strongly reminiscent of Davos. All the members of the expedition were therefore in tip-top health, and it was only in acute cases, especially among the Chinese and the Mongols, that we had recourse to Dr HUMMEL and his medicine chests. The wind was, indeed, sometimes rather trying; but when it fell, and the sun blazed down, one missed it again and began to long for it. So far, we had not had a higher temperature than 32.3° Centigrade; and however hot it was during the day, the evenings were always delightfully cool, and the nights were cold. For summer travellers in Mongolia the nights are a blessing and a salvation. The daily amplitude rises to as much as 25 and 30° C., which is very considerable.

The pilot balloons

Every day Dr HAUDE sent up a pilot balloon. We were told that only a couple of such balloons had been sent up in China — in Peking, and presumably also in Sikawei. This particular method of study seems not to have been introduced to any extent worth mentioning in India either. Our nearest pilot-balloon station was thus Irkutsk. In this respect the whole of Inner Asia is a vast *terra incognita*, including also the whole of China proper.